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Los Angeles

Features*



104

STACKED: Langer's pastrami with Swiss on rye

On the Cover:

» Photographed for *Los Angeles* by Craig Cutler. See page 18 for sandwich details

CRAIG CUTLER; FOOD STYLIST: SUSAN SPUNGEN; PROP STYLIST: MATTHEW GLEASON


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Read Bret Easton Ellis's annotated guide to the L.A. locations featured in his new book, *Imperial Bedrooms*, the *Less Than Zero* sequel

» ACTION!
Find out what Industry experts have to say about this year's Los Angeles Film Festival and the future of independent filmmaking in L.A.

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Zero Hour

The 25th-anniversary edition of *Less Than Zero* recently landed in my mailbox, and it made me gasp. Had a quarter of a century really passed since I first read Bret Easton Ellis's novel about tanned, morally bankrupt L.A. teens, their noses bleeding from too much coke, their afternoons a boozy, sexed-up haze of MTV and Ms. Pac-Man? I devoured the book when it came out in 1985—I was an L.A. teen then, after all. Like the characters in the book, I listened to KROQ and wore Ray-Bans (albeit ill-fitting—I found them in a public restroom), but that's pretty much where the similarities between my life and theirs ended. Rich kids from the hills turned up their collars and noses at Valley dwellers like me. A few audacious friends scampered across town to underground clubs or to stake out Simon Le Bon at the Westwood Marquis, but me? On a Saturday night I was more likely sitting at home reading *The Book of Lists*.

In this issue contributor Jesse Katz, a college classmate of Ellis's, checks in with the writer, whose *Imperial Bedrooms*, a sequel to *Less Than Zero*, comes out this month. Ellis says that many people tell him his breakout novel made them want to move to L.A., which baffles him. Having just reread the book, which holds up well given the dated references (think Betamax), I'm baffled, too. Gang rapes, snuff films, corpses abandoned in alleys—they wouldn't have inspired me to buy a ticket west. Still, Ellis's work—compelling, spare, and totally grim—would define my generation. When I was away at college a couple of years after the book's publication, I repeatedly fielded two questions from people interested in Los Angeles: 1) "Have you been shot at?" and 2) "Is it really like *Less Than Zero*?" The questions annoyed me—my friends here were neither privileged nor soulless. (Plus, I'd never been shot at.) They also prepared me for an adulthood spent defending L.A. and defying its stereotypes.

THIS RANDOM THOUGHT JUST IN

Having recently enjoyed an afternoon at **Manhattan's vital, artfully landscaped High Line**, the park built in 2009 on an old elevated railway, I'm convinced we can create the same along the L.A. River.

The book's portrayal of what it's like to grow up in Los Angeles lies in stark contrast to my experience and, it turns out, to that of Anne Taylor Fleming. In her Open City column this month, Anne acknowledges that to love L.A. is to embrace the wacky with the wondrous, the dark with the light. Anne has created a small town within the sprawl, a place of sensory comforts that she could never imagine leaving. I couldn't agree more. An out-of-towner reading her piece and deciding to move here? *That* I could understand.

Mary Melton

Mary Melton
Editor

[Off the Record] 5 Things We're Not Supposed to Tell You About This Issue

88 Years

Age of **BETTY WHITE**, who turned down our offer to be June's Encounter subject because of her hectic schedule (see whom we got instead on page 42). The actress-comedian is clearly having a moment, popping up everywhere from the blogosphere to *Oprah* to *Saturday Night Live* to *Hot in Cleveland*, her new sitcom that premieres this month on TV Land. "We would love to do this," White's rep told us, "but frankly we're just too overwhelmed by all the attention."

24 Hours

How long photographer **DAVE LAURIDSEN** was asked to postpone his shoot on the patio of Pane e Vino for our cover story on lunching in L.A. (see page 104). According to the restaurant's spokesperson, a certain "A-lister" (Scarlett Johansson, we found out) had booked a reservation for that day, and they didn't want to scare her off.

15 Letters

Characters in the signature of Bret Easton Ellis scrawled across the chest of **SHERYL NIELDS**, who photographed the writer for "Reflections of a Valley Boy" by contributor Jesse Katz (see page 128). When Nields asked Ellis for his autograph, she "decided to go 'rock star' on him." She unbuttoned her shirt and handed him a Sharpie.

196 Dollars

What California attorney general and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown thought his high school yearbook would fetch on eBay. Says writer-at-large **ED LEIBOWITZ**, who interviewed Brown for "The Seeker" (see page 118), "When I told him his yearbook was going for $49, he was surprised. He thought it should go for four times that."

17 Voice Mails

Number of phone messages Dennis "Mr. Hollywood" Woodruff left for photographer **GREGG SEGAL**. "I would get three or four calls a day for a week," says Segal, who documented Woodruff along with four other local street characters (see page 122). "He would read off a statement he'd obviously written about what we should include in the story. Then he'd call back and modify his statement several times, like, minutes later. He drove me nuts!"

Illustration by **LEIF PARSONS**


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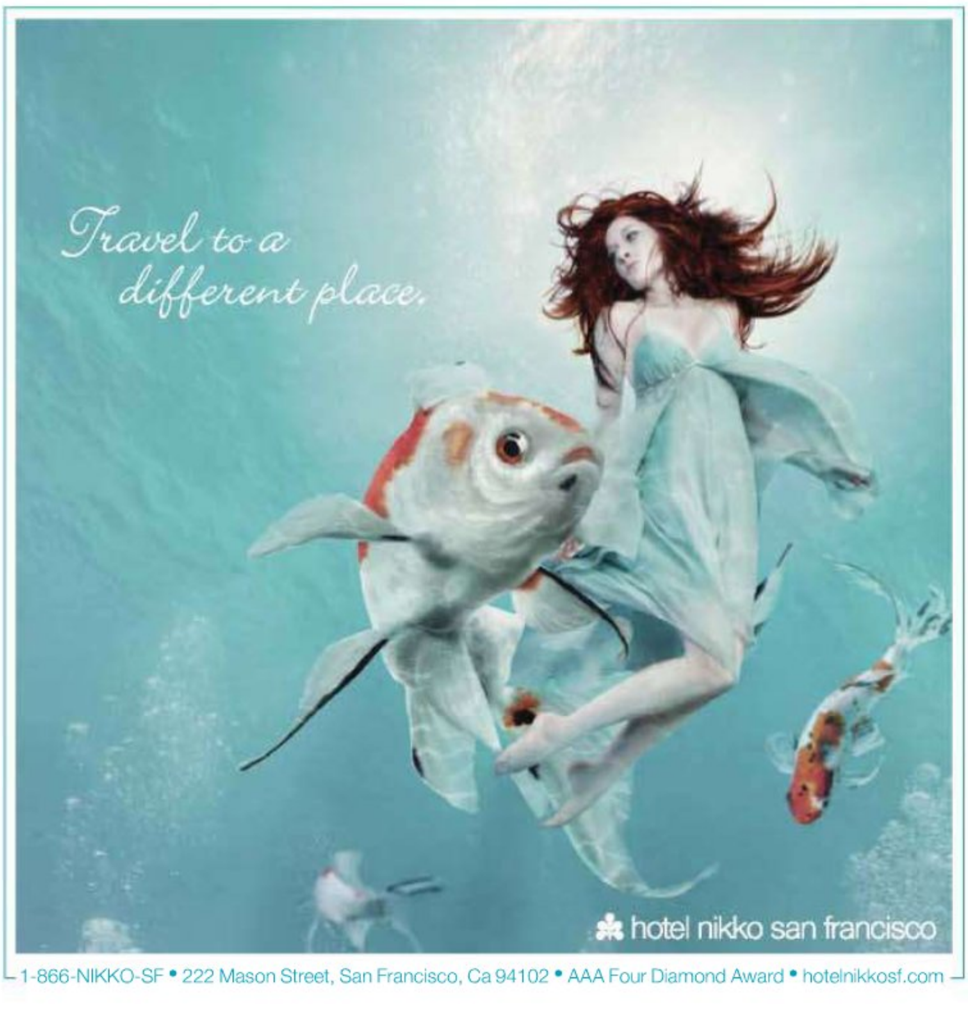
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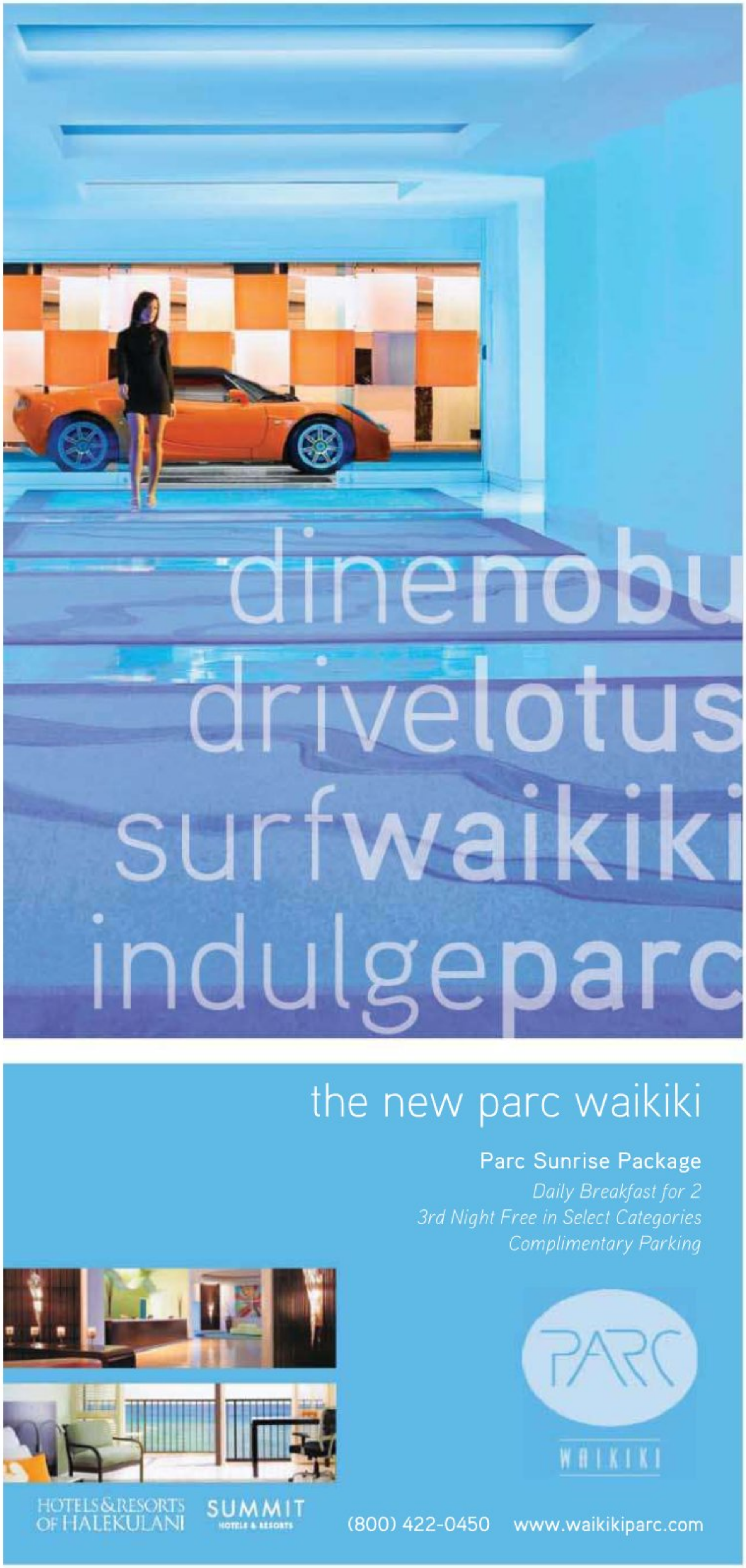
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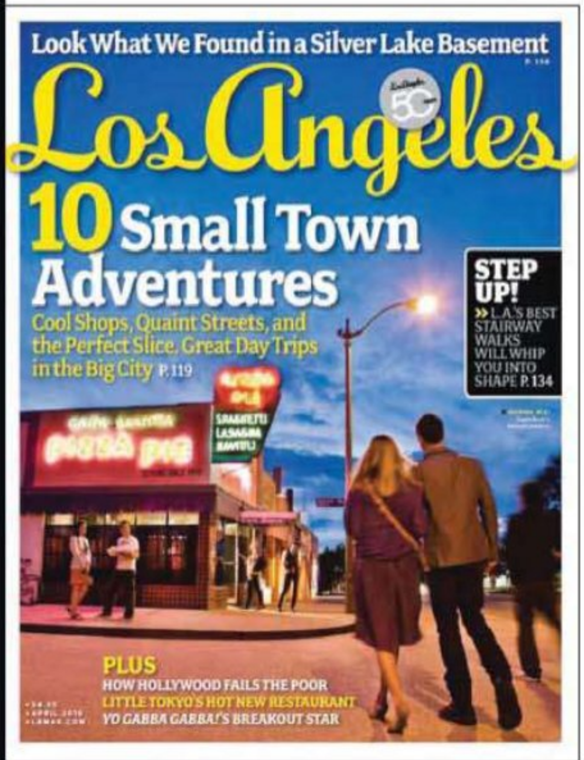
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Giving Back

» **As president** of both a leading skid row agency and the Los Angeles Central Providers Collaborative, I applaud Mark Lacter's article on giving to the social sector [Business, "What Gives?" April]. Theater tickets are far more appealing than overnight bed tickets. Designer gowns are more attractive than used clothing. UCLA grads are probably more articulate than our homeless friends and neighbors. But let's not guilt people of any economic stratum into giving. I would much rather have people give because they care. Take Kirk and Anne Douglas. Anne has helped raise funds for the Anne Douglas Center at the Los Angeles Mission for almost 20 years. Yes, her name is on the building, but that is not why she and her husband help. Why do they help? To quote Kirk, "Because it makes me feel good!"

Herbert Smith
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Hidden Gems

» **My family and I** moved here a year and a half ago so I could pastor a small Reformed Presbyterian Church in the Eagle Rock–Glassell Park area. I started reading *Los Angeles* so I could get to know the city. "Small Town Adventures" [April] featured many of the places I have grown to love. But when I read the Montrose entry, there was no mention of one of my favorite restaurants. The Black Cow Cafe is a marvelous little eatery with espressos, pastries, and lunch options. The decor is pleasing (check out the ceiling fans), and the place is always buzzing with excitement. It's worth a visit for the Angus burger with arugula, Maytag blue cheese, and bacon.

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» **I enjoyed** "Small Town Adventures," but you missed a great place in Uptown Whittier:

» DEPARTMENT OF EXPLICATION

A Star (Sandwich) Is Born

» IN THE NAME of science we researched 77 sandwiches for our "Delicious Guide to Lunch in L.A." But it was the peppers-*burrata*-prosciutto number from Huckleberry that inspired our cover. Photographer Craig Cutler and food stylist Susan Spungen assembled the ingredients. No surprise that the combo accounts for about a third of all sandwich sales at the Santa Monica café (see page 108).

OUR COVER MODEL



FROM TOP: BROWN CANNON 3; CRAIG CUTLER; FOOD STYLIST: SUSAN SPUNGEN


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» WINNER'S CIRCLE


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» **Dozens vied** to win Get L.A., our short-film contest cosponsored by L.A. Works, but it was Alyssa Price's *Pearl*, about a day in the life of a Prius, that was named the Official Selection. We spoke to Price as well as James Song and Zachary Migdal—two of the guys behind the audience favorite, *F.L.A.SH*, about the energy that drives the city. See both movies at LAmag.com.

Who or what was your inspiration?
Alyssa Price: My first script was about the changes in the environment in Los Angeles. My husband thought it was too earnest, so I got over my ego and wrote three different ideas. *Pearl* was everybody's favorite.
James Song: David Lynch.
Zachary Migdal: In *Catching the Big Fish*, Lynch talks about looking down on the city from a high vantage point and seeing a blanket of lights.

Independent filmmaking in Los Angeles is notoriously difficult. Were there any glitches?
AP: We had a fender bender outside the Paramount lot while trying to get a shot. There was no damage to the other woman's car, so she let us go. Pearl, my Prius, has a small dent.
ZM: We had tested our still digital camera, and it worked fine. But the first minute on the first day of shooting, it wasn't working. I called Nikon, and they solved the problem.

How much did your production cost?
AP: About $60—the cost of gas and a car wash.
ZM: We rented a light for $35 and bought a wireless remote for my camera. The actors were volunteers, and we had or borrowed other equipment for free. I did get some really good wafer cookies and baklava from Joe's Deli for everyone. That was probably $7.

How long did it take?
AP: I mapped out four to five days to write, about a week to shoot, and a week to finish.
JS: About three days to shoot.

Alyssa, how did you celebrate your big win?
AP: With a reservation at Rivera. It was fun to celebrate having the number one film at *Los Angeles* magazine's number one new restaurant. We got a fancy bottle of red wine.

What's next?
AP: I have a short film I just finished writing. I have the time to write, direct, and act. I'm trying to see what happens.
JS: This showed us the chemistry that Zach and I have together. Now we are in the process of establishing a production company, Bed Monster Productions.

the Whittier Museum. You can't miss it on the corner of Philadelphia Street and Newlin Avenue—it has a mural of Whittier by local artist Dennis McGonagle. The museum depicts Whittier's first 100 years as it grew from a Quaker colony to the diverse city it is today. The museum pays tribute to Nixon's beginnings in Whittier (a re-created law office) and to local ingenuity (an experimental airplane). Yes, there is an airplane inside the building!

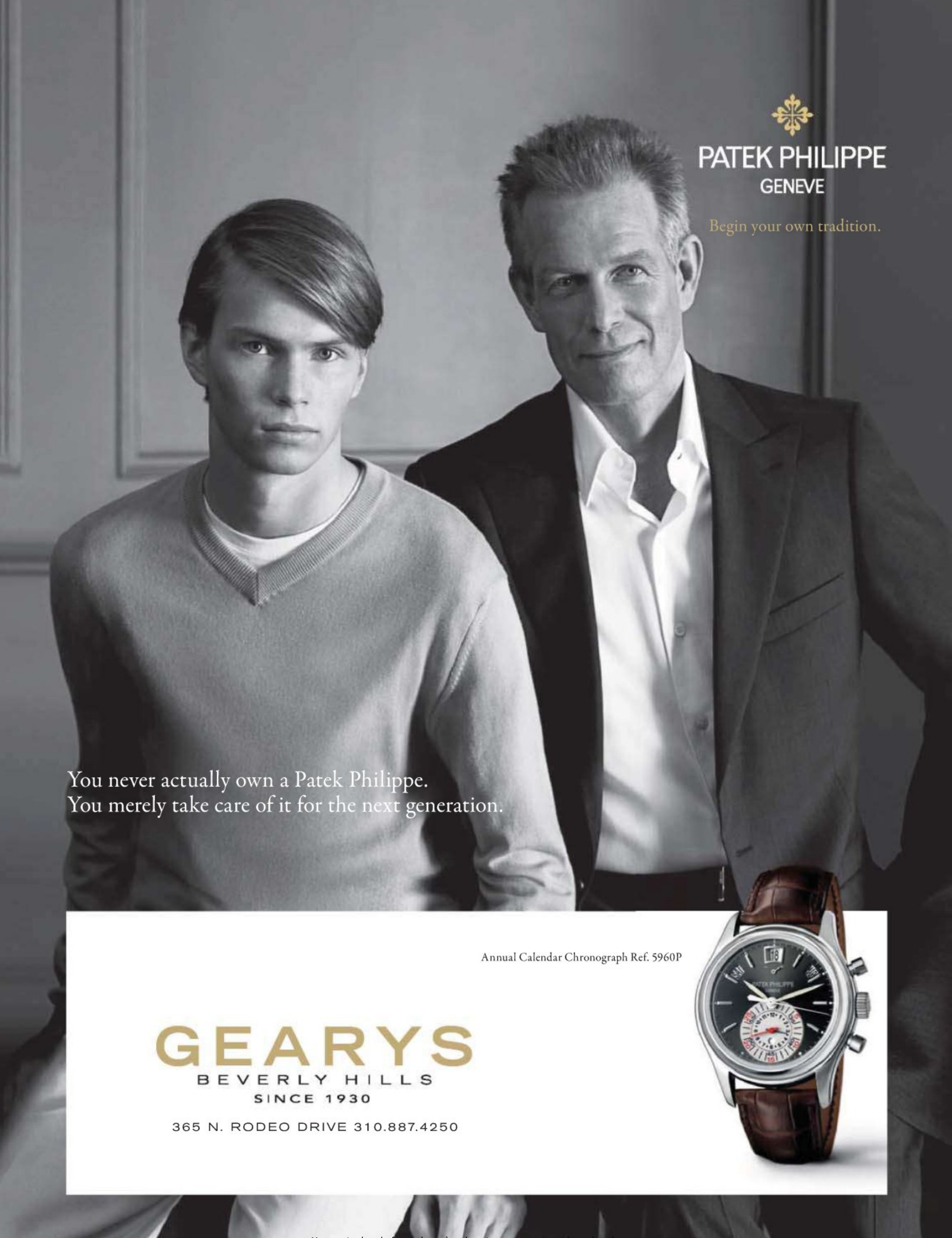
Janna Roznos
WHITTIER

CORRECTIONS

» **We inadvertently** omitted the credits for the opening spread of "Tough Sell" (May). The stylist was Caroline Cagney; prop stylist, Renata Mosci; hair and makeup, Stephanie Daniel. The featured items were lent to us by the following venues: The Way We Wore, L.A. (vintage sable shrug); Golyester, L.A. (vintage necklaces and cuff); the Silk Trading Co., L.A. (André & Martine vintage settee); Maurice's Rug Gallery, South Pasadena (Tabriz rug); Pierre Deux, West Hollywood (Pierre Deux antiqued rooster and voyager trunk); Timothy Corrigan, L.A. (Victorian silver-plated basket and reproduction French School painting, far right).

» **The caption** on page 122 of "Small Town Adventures" (April) misidentified one of the Eagle Rock stores. It is Kumquat, not Twerps, that appears in the photo.

» Comments can be e-mailed to letters@LAmag.com. They can also be faxed to 323-801-0105 or sent to Letters to the Editor, *Los Angeles* magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036. Please include your full name and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. For subscriber services and to sign up for our free weekly e-newsletter, go to LAmag.com.


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by Anne Taylor Fleming



Child of L.A.

Loving a city deeply means accepting the weird with the wonderful

Sometimes when I fly into Los Angeles after a week or two away, I am amazed anew at the sheer size of it. I understand, looking down, how daunting the terrain must seem—does seem—to many, how vast and centerless, an easy-to-caricature anticity. This is no Boston or San Francisco or New York. This is a whole other thing, a spill of suburbs pushing out to the desert on one side and to the sea on the other, a metropolis that, I admit, deflects easy affection of the kind evidenced by the denizens of the aforementioned places. Yet I feel something akin to love as we drop down for the landing and I catch sight of the Hollywood sign and the beaches and the coastal hills. Home, my body says. I am home.

I have never lived anywhere else. My uncut umbilical connection is to L.A. I was born here and stayed. I had the occasional itch of restlessness, the thought that I should sample another locale, but it always passed in an instant, was gone by the next dawn. Over the years I watched friends move away. Some went to college in the east and never came back. Others left for work or love. A few said they never felt right here, that it was too sunny, too unhinged, too earthquake prone. They went north to Portland or Seattle, cities they saw as more manageable, more felicitous for raising a family. I went to going-away parties for them, some of whom were close pals. Were we, despite our shared childhoods, of such different stuff, with such different needs? Had Los Angeles not penetrated their marrow as it had so clearly mine?

We had cantered together, these schoolmates and I, through many an afternoon, roaming the suburban Westside streets. We rode our beat-up bikes, cardigans fastened at the neck and flapping behind. We went toe to toe with the boys, playing fierce games of capture the flag in vacant lots, and had races on contraptions made from garbage can lids balanced on rusty skates. Oh, the noise, the freedom, the bruises. Nobody in the 1950s and '60s wore helmets or knee pads. The children's security apparatus was not in force yet. The faces of snatched kids hadn't started to appear on milk cartons. Parental fear wasn't in overdrive. We spent most of our lives outside

Illustration by GRACIA LAM


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(sans sun protection). The warm evenings in particular were our domain when, after a lackluster dinner of overcooked pork chops and frozen peas washed down with a glass of milk, we were turned loose to have one last run at the day. I have always thought this was a great place to be a girl child, that the very nature of it—the weather, the geography—allowed us an early and unusual sense of independence and physical equality, long before there was any agitation for parity between the sexes or even talk of it.

The beaches were our ultimate playing fields. We learned to swim in tough surf, to fling Frisbees with accuracy, and to eat sandwiches gritty with sand. It was all so unantiseptic. To this day there's not a bit of clean freak in me or, for that matter, any daintiness. I love strong women, self-assured women with muscles and uncoiffed hair and voices that carry above the sound of the waves. I'm a sucker for the sun sinking into the Pacific, knowing we are saying the continent's nightly farewell, just as I'm tickled by the fruit plucked from my trees. Often of a morning I wander into the front yard, in my nightgown, to pick a lemon for my iced tea, pressing its warm, bright yellowness to my nose. None of this has grown old for me—not the visual or tactile or aromatic elements of my hometown. Those who misread L.A. do so because they don't partake of its sensory gifts; they come in from the outside and take their derisive potshots at what they regard as a paradise manqué full of kooks and hedonists.

Admittedly the pleasure seekers (many of them fairly recent arrivals) were everywhere in the late '60s and early '70s. At that point I had gone from child to child bride, falling in love at 18 with a man 22 years older. We bought the one-bathroom, 1,400-square-foot cottage in Brentwood that we still live in. My new life seemed like a sensual extension of my adolescence. We swam in the ocean. We cooked wonderful meals in a time when the California food scene was emerging. On the way home from the beach we would stop at Santa Monica Seafood for fish to grill or poach, then proceed to Tanaka's for fresh produce (the former is very much in existence, albeit in a new location; the latter, alas, is gone). In the surrounding homes, marriages were coming undone just as mine was beginning. There were joints and hot tubs and a general unbuckling—news of which simply roused the anti-L.A. biases of outsiders. As a young reporter, when I went east on assignment, usually to Manhattan, I had to fend off put-downs of my birth land. One of the things that struck me in those first forays was how often I was asked where I had gone to college, where had my parents attended. Nobody local had ever asked these questions, except maybe one or two old family friends in the way of casual inquiry. That disdain for pedigree is one I share; it is at the root of my value system, a direct legacy of growing up here.

* * * * *

Is Los Angeles perfect? Hardly. The fault lines have always been obvious—the literal ones beneath the earth's surface and those on it that divide rich and poor, white and black. I was 15 when the first Watts riots hit; there was another racial explosion the following year, during which my husband-to-be, the *Newsweek* bureau chief, was bashed on the head with a two-by-four and nearly killed by a rioter. The cops in those days were scary and racist. Under Chief William H. Parker, they felt like an occupying army as they swaggered about, a testosterone-fueled posse in motorcycle boots and aviator sunglasses. It was more of the same for the 14 years Daryl Gates ran the LAPD. By then, a lot of rich people had put themselves into gated communities, leaving L.A. even more divided, fearful, and less than paradisiacal.

I understood early on that there was a dark and unsavory side to the city. You felt it, just as palpably as you felt the sun on your skin. There was always Raymond Chandler, with his tense, elegant prose, to remind you. I remember reading him in my twenties, thinking, Yes, out there in this immense city there are crooks and molls and a whole lot of regular folks who migrated here looking for something, some nirvana or new beginning or spiritual elixir, and have fallen short and had their hearts broken. Beneath the noise of the sprinklers you could hear the hum of disappointment. I developed a keen ear at a young age. My actor parents moved west seeking fame and fortune. They got some of each; in fact, by anyone's standards they got a good measure of both. But there is never quite enough of either when it comes to stardom (after all, just a relatively small number of hand- and footprints command the concrete in front of Grauman's Chinese), and there were long, idle days spent waiting for the agent to call, with my father in his robe, endlessly smoking cigarettes and playing solitaire in the unlit living room, even as the sun rippled on the kidney-shaped turquoise pool out back. These disparities, unique to L.A., provided a cautionary tale for a daughter about the vagaries of celebrity.

The city can also be lonesome. Some days, even for me, the ultimate native, it seems so splayed out, so suburban, so segregated—too temperamentally cool to feel such warmth toward. But I live in it as in a small town. Many of us do. We draw our neighborhoods around us like a comforting blanket. I've used the same dry cleaner for decades, the same market, the same shoe repair. The clerks and proprietors know me by name. They knew my father, dead 11 years now, and my mother, living in her own home a half mile from me. Should I feel energetic or nostalgic or both, I can walk through my history: by my mother's house and my father's (which remarkably survived the tear-down mania of the '90s), by my grammar school and the hospital where I was born in Santa Monica. I can, and often do, trek to the beach and back. People seem to walk more these days; in some ways the traffic gridlock has been a plus, causing vital centers—full of sushi joints and street markets and boutiques—to spring up, in Silver Lake and Culver City and downtown. There has been a surge, too, in culture: the Getty Center, looking a tad penal though inviting on top of its hill; the magical, swooping Disney Hall. I partake of these cultural offerings on occasion, but I spend most of my free time outside—always with a hat and sun protection—hiking in the hills with a friend or my dog, listening to the natural sounds (no iPod for me). I know people seek their pleasure in the energy and noise of the city, in the restaurants and the art openings, the deals and the deadlines. At an earlier point in life I did that as well. Lately, though, my joy and solace have been found outdoors in a return to the scenes of that unfettered childhood. On such outings I cannot help but see my earlier selves along the trail, the smells of sage and Scotch broom carrying me back to my ponytail days, when my city and I were much younger.

Some days, even for me, the city seems so splayed out. But I live in it as in a small town. Many of us do. We draw our neighborhoods around us like a comforting blanket.

Buzz

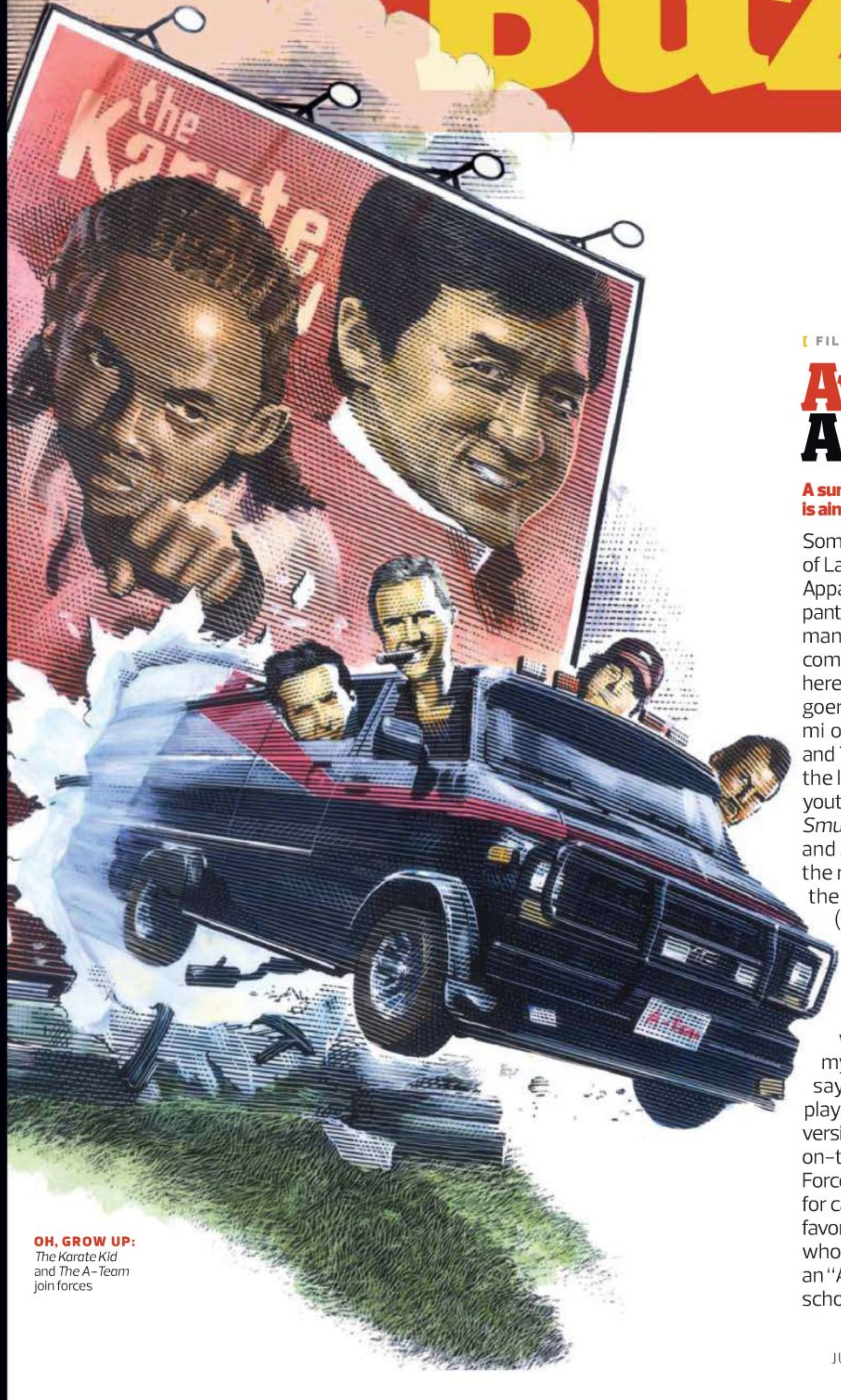


ILLUSTRATION: MARK SUMMERS

OH, GROW UP: *The Karate Kid* and *The A-Team* join forces

[FILM]

Awesome Again

A summer of remakes is aimed squarely at Gen Y

Somewhere between the rise of Lady Gaga and American Apparel's take on the Hammer pant, we lost track of how many times the '80s have come back. Well, they're here once more. Soon moviegoers can expect a tsunami of revivals of the films and TV shows that decorated the lunch boxes of their youth, like *21 Jump Street*, *The Smurfs*, *Red Dawn*, *Tron*, and *Short Circuit*. June sees the release of two from the decade's most beloved (and cheeseballiest) franchises: **The Karate Kid** and **The A-Team**. "I wanted to do this movie because I didn't want them to screw up my childhood memories," says Sharlto Copley, who plays H.M. Murdock in the film version of the series about an on-the-lam U.S. Army Special Forces unit with a predilection for campy violence. "It was my favorite show," says the actor, who coincidentally organized an "A-Team gang" in grade school (you know him from

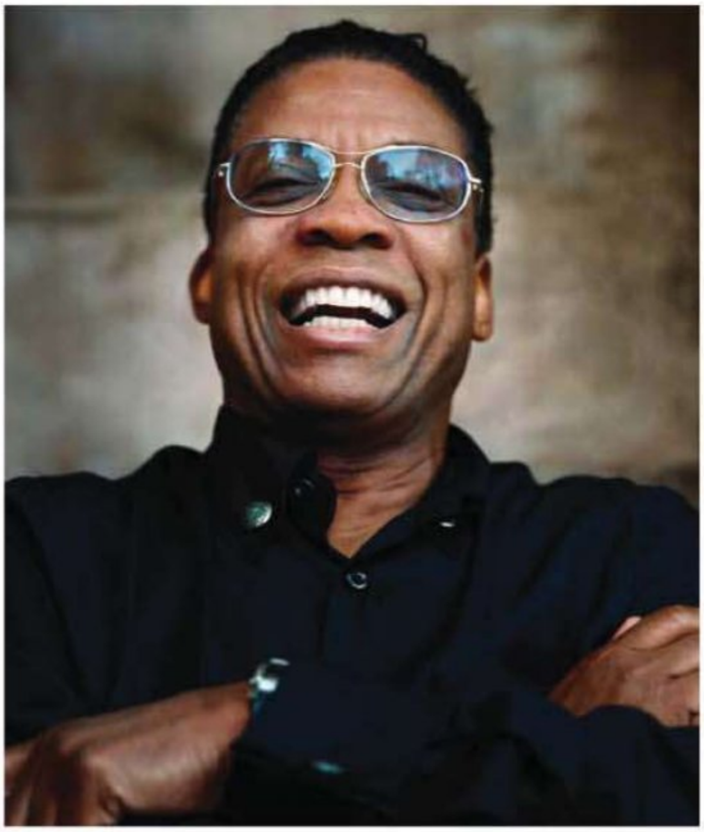
District 9). Viewers who remember the program just as fondly may be disappointed; little of the original has been preserved. Same goes for *The Karate Kid*, which relocates from the Valley to Beijing, where the "kid" (played by producer Will Smith's son Jaden) receives lessons not in the Japanese martial art of the film's title but in kung fu (Jackie Chan plays his trainer). Early reviews have cried foul, but we beg to differ. After all, the people behind these remakes are, for the most part, the ones who grew up obsessively watching them. Shouldn't they decide what to keep and what to lose? *Opening in select theaters June 11.*

[MUSIC]

Black Sabbath

The Skirball takes a cue from the siddur

» Had we known about Johnny Mathis's recording of "Kol Nidre" or Lena Horne's "Hava Nagila," we would have deleted Jay-Z from our bat mitzvah playlist. "There's no shortage of documentation about Jews performing African American music, but the other side of the story hasn't been told," says Josh Kun, an Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism associate professor and *Los Angeles* contributor. This month Kun shares music and anecdotes at **Go Down, Moses**, a listening party at the Skirball that accompanies the exhibition *Jews on Vinyl*. Apparently wandering in the desert can be very good for the vocal chords. *June 3. Go to skirball.org.*



[MUSIC]

Rhythm Section

» Talk about peripatetic. Keyboardist Herbie Hancock trained in classical music, broke from traditional jazz to champion funk and synthesized pop, won a Grammy for a tribute to Joni Mitchell, and for his new *Imagine Project* CD recorded with everyone from guitar deity Jeff Beck to sitarist Anoushka Shankar. Expect a broad lineup as he curates this summer's **Jazz at the Bowl**. Opening concerts feature Afrobeat star Femi Kuti (July 7), soul king Smokey Robinson (July 14), and smooth-jazz virtuosos Lee Ritenour and Dave Grusin (July 21). *Go to hollywoodbowl.com.*

[ART]

New Canvas

» When superstar East Coast art dealer and gallery owner **Jeffrey Deitch** (below, right) was named head of the Museum of Contemporary Art in January, critics balked: The line between art and commerce was finally kaput! With his pop sensibility (he's repped Keith Haring and Mariko Mori), flashy glasses, and big Rolodex of wealthy (ahem, former) clients, Deitch is sure to draw traffic to Grand Avenue, and to that we say hoorah. After all, L.A.'s modern art repository almost went belly-up, and we're not holding our breath for another hefty Eli Broad bailout. Deitch takes his post on June 1. *Go to moca.org.*



Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

From cupcakes to cheesecake, L.A. offers a bottomless pit of inspiration for reality-show producers. Seriously, would you rather waste an hour on chat roulette? Three TV series debut this month to scratch the surface (emphasis on "surface") of town.



CUPCAKE WARS

The frosting will fly when four purveyors of the sugary dessert (that has shockingly not reached the saturation point) compete in elimination challenges on the Food Network. In the premiere, bakers vie to have their treats featured at a local awards show. *June 18. Go to foodnetwork.com.*



THE REAL L WORD

It could be maudlin and sensational (not in a good way), but it was rarely dull. *The L Word*, the long-running Showtime series about fictional lesbians looking for love in L.A., ended last year, but creator Ilene Chaiken returns with a program about real lesbians seeking the same. *June 20. Go to showtime.com.*



HOLLY'S WORLD

We teared up watching Kendra, Holly, and Bridget's last episode of *Girls Next Door*, but we should have known Hef's exes would be back. Holly-go-flighty brings her den mother ways to Vegas to confront unsexy issues (local politics, traffic) on E! Entertainment Television. *June 13. Go to eonline.com.*

FROM TOP: MARTIN SCHOELLER/COURTESY LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC; LYNNE SLADKY/AP PHOTO. BOTTOM (FROM LEFT): COURTESY FOOD NETWORK; CARIN BAER/SHOWTIME; E! NETWORKS


SUB-ZERO
WOLF

[MUSIC]

Holler Back

The Bowl breaks out the books

>> The Hollywood Bowl will be aflutter with poodle skirts when **Grease** shimmies into a new sing-along spot. Didi Conn—aka pink-haired beauty school dropout Frenchy—hosts. She dishes on Rydell High School's most popular students.

Q: What was it like to shoot *Grease*?
A: On the set we stayed in character all day. That gave us license to be as silly and horny as those teenagers.

Q: As horny?
A: *Grease* is the time, is the place, is the motion. Believe me, there was plenty of motion going on. Our Winnebagos were rocking and rolling.

Q: Do you ever get recognized?
A: Yes, all the time. People hear my voice and ask, "Are you Frenchy?" I was under the impression that it was much deeper and richer now, but I guess it ain't.

Q: Do you still have your Pink Ladies jacket?
A: I certainly do, and I'm going to wear it! It even has the mustard stain from the night we shot the drive-in movie scene.

Q: Is this show a reunion for the gang?
A: I want it to be. Hopefully we can all do the hand jive. *June 25. Go to hollywoodbowl.com.*





GO WEST: Dancers strike a pose at the Calico Saloon

BOOK

Home Grown

The history of Knott's Berry Farm springs to life in a comprehensive new volume

Chris Merritt and Eric Lynxwiler's **Knott's Preserved** (Angel City Press, 160 pages, $40) takes readers through the scenic ghost town built by Walter Knott in 1941 that was a precursor to the theme park that bears his name. The authors spent 18 years unearthing rare images and conducting interviews with the creators of what Lynxwiler calls "the most quaint, honest, free roadside experience you could possibly have." Knott didn't skimp on authenticity, either. "It's the only theme park I know of that had a functioning church and a whorehouse." *Go to knottspreserved.com.*

[ART]

Public Exposure

Beverly Hills shows its boho side

>> The scenario: Inching along Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills, you look over and think, What's with all the wacky sculptures in that park? That park is Beverly Gardens, and this month a daylong party celebrates Roxy Paine's **Erratic**, the newest addition to the city's public art collection. Known for his stainless steel trees, Brooklyn-based artist Paine has created what resembles a giant moon rock. Self-guided activities to welcome the piece include video installations at the Paley Center for Media, signings at Taschen Books, and a Paine-inspired sweet made by Sprinkles Cupcakes. Says event organizer and art doyen Bettina Korek, "This kind of collaboration is totally unique to Los Angeles." *June 5. Go to publicartparty.com.*



[TALK]

Bad to the Marrow?

TV's most cynical chef—surprise—speaks his mind

>> We're wondering if his cameo on *Yo Gabba Gabba!* is a sign that famed misanthrope **Anthony Bourdain** has softened his outlook (he can always blame marriage and fatherhood). See if he has when the celeb chef discusses his new book, *Medium Raw: A Bloody Valentine to the World of Food and the People Who Cook*, at Royce Hall. *June 16. Go to ticketmaster.com.*

[DANCE]

Stop Motion

A storied ensemble steps down in L.A.

>> The **Merce Cunningham Dance Company** is taking a bow. In its final L.A. appearance, the New York-based contemporary troupe (which disbands next year following a world tour honoring its iconic founder, who died last year) stages a revival of *Roaratorio* at Disney Hall. It's a venue, says Trevor Carlson, Cunningham Dance Foundation executive director, that the choreographer had always wanted to stretch his legs in but never did: "I remember him feeling quite at home in Los Angeles." The program features music by Cunningham's late partner, John Cage. *June 4–6. Go to musiccenter.org.*

// SHAYNA ROSE ARNOLD, LEILAH BERNSTEIN, ANN HEROLD, CHRIS NICHOLS, AND SARA WILSON

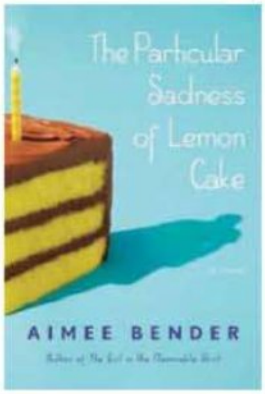
>> For more must-do events this month, see our expanded online listings at **LAmag.com/guide**.

FROM TOP: FROM *KNOTT'S PRESERVED*, ANGEL CITY PRESS/COURTESY ORANGE COUNTY ARCHIVES; © TRAVEL CHANNEL; COURTESY PARAMOUNT PICTURES


Father's Day is June 20
everyday
Hero
he's always on the right course
Make this Father's Day one to remember with a gift from Macy's
TASSO ELBA GOLF
Only at Macy's
Patterned performance polo. Moisture-wicking polyester. S-XXL. $36. Hydrowick cargo shorts. Cotton/polyester. Waists 32-42. $30.
Advertised items may not be at your local Macy's. For store locations and hours, log on to macys.com
the magic of
macy's
macys.com

Coming Attractions | 5 New Releases

1.



[BOOK]

The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake
Aimee Bender
(Doubleday, 304 pages, $26)

» Nine-year-old Rose Edelstein has a special ability: She can taste people's emotions through their cooking. Rose narrates USC associate professor Aimee Bender's delicious second novel. She perceives a crushing sadness in her mother's food but can't find the source of her father's cold disposition. As Rose copes with her newfound gift, she finds that her brother also has an unusual skill—one that pushes the struggling family to the brink. It leads us to wonder, What would our own cooking taste like? // WENDY WITHERSPOON

2.

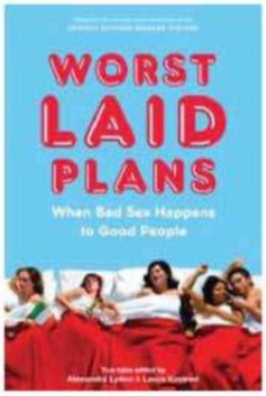


[CD]

Before Today
Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti
(4AD, $14)

» Add one more name to the lengthy list of famous Beverly Hills High graduates: Ariel Rosenberg, aka freak-folk artist Ariel Pink. The avant-garde musician and his band of L.A. all-stars, Haunted Graffiti, are out this month with a mind-expanding summer mixtape. It's a layered assortment of genres, including high-gloss disco, funk, California folk, grunge, and '60s British psychedelia, which emerge through an epic swath of audio fuzz. The overall sound is surprisingly dancey, united by a spacey groove that won't quit. // LESLEY BARGAR SUTER

3.

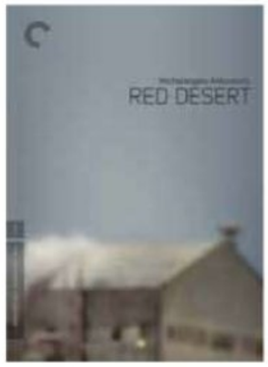


[BOOK]

Worst Laid Plans: When Bad Sex Happens to Good People
Edited by Alexandra Lydon and Laura Kindred
(Abrams Image, 224 pages, $15)

» Based on a popular stage show at L.A.'s Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, this compilation features women and men recounting their funniest bad-sex stories. In print, the tales of urination, premature ejaculation, and masturbation—that's just for starters—are shocking and hilarious. Contributors include *24* actress Mary Lynn Rajskub and former *SNL* cast members Casey Wilson and Laraine Newman. Reading in bed is fine, but it might kill the mood. // L.B.S.

4.



[DVD]

Red Desert
(Criterion, $40)

» *Red Desert* was another step in Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni's journey into modern alienation, before such a thing came to sound more dated than it actually is. The proof is that Antonioni's films don't feel dated at all. Made in 1964, *Desert* is an ambient piece, the story of a suicidal woman (the filmmaker's favorite melancholy bombshell, Monica Vitti) who flirts with a potentially illuminating affair, told in noise and hush and—in Antonioni's first non-black-and-white movie—color at once faded and vibrant. *Desert* is the missing link between the landmark *L'Avventura* and the English-language *Blow-Up*. // STEVE ERICKSON

5.



[BOOK]

The Madonnas of Echo Park
Brando Skyhorse
(Free Press, 224 pages, $23)

» In the immigrant community of Echo Park, a young girl is dancing outside to Madonna's "Borderline" when she's shot and killed in a drive-by shooting. In the gritty debut novel by Brando Skyhorse this central tragedy bleeds into the stories of a dozen other characters. Among the multiple narrators are a former nun whose roomful of coats can't keep her warm and a bus driver who rejected his father's gang only to commit murder himself. Combined, their tragic tales form a bittersweet love letter to the neighborhood. // W.W.

Spot On



Brando Skyhorse: Pop artists loom large in the Mexican American author and Echo Park native's first novel. What's his inspiration? "I first heard Madonna in elementary school, and the buzz back then was that she was Mexican. Gwen Stefani has this fascination with the '*chola* girl' look, and Morrissey's connection to the Latino community is legendary. I'm asked a lot, 'Why do Mexicans like Morrissey?' I answer, 'Why not?' I'm sure Morrissey would have a more erudite response."

SPOT ON: ERIC VAN DEN BRULLE



In these  times of ours, you

magazines. That the overwhelming

swept them right out of  .

through their  years, folks are

they were just a few years ago. Sure,

But there's also a lot of  being

300 million paid subscriptions.

might think that 

don't read



of the online world has

But it's not true at all. From 

reading magazines 

than

there's a 

being spent online.

spent on magazines, with nearly

MAGAZINES
The *Power of Print*®

Celebrity Impersonator



Terri Navarra has made a career of being Joan Rivers—without a nip or a tuck

BY JULIA MARCHE HOWE

» **"There was one guy** you could not convince I wasn't Joan Rivers. Many times people say, 'OK, wink, wink, you're not her. So how are things in show business?'"

» **The California native,** who won't reveal her age, grew up in Concord. After enrolling in a literature program at Diablo Valley College in Northern California, she won a scholarship to study performing arts at UC Irvine, where she earned a bachelor's degree.

» **While working as** an actress, Navarra moved to Los Angeles and joined a commedia dell'arte troupe. People told her that she was a natural impersonator. As a child she imitated the characters she saw on TV—especially those from *I Love Lucy* (she says she can recite every episode verbatim).

» **The most impersonated** celebrity in the country is Elvis Presley. According to the Professional Elvis Impersonators Association, there are currently 500 people re-creating the King.

» **Twenty years ago** Navarra did a rendition of Zsa Zsa Gabor that ran on Rick Dees' radio show, which got her a gig at a Beverly Hills event. Then she was hired to do Vanna White for a *Wheel of Fortune* parody. These days her repertoire includes Hedda Hopper, Phyllis Diller, Lily Tomlin, and Carmen Miranda, but for financial reasons, she focuses on Rivers. "Some celebrities only have one sellable point, but Joan has many, so I can play her in many different venues."

» **She performs for** corporate and charitable functions but has stopped doing private parties. Her fee starts at $850 an hour, with a one-hour minimum, but it varies by location and event. "I spend time figuring out what the event is about, so when I walk out, I know what's going on."

» **At a recent event** a group of women followed Navarra into the restroom. "They asked me, 'Joan, can we have our picture taken?' While I was in the stall! I said, 'Right now?' I gave them a great shot by the bathroom sink."

» **Getting ready** is "no picnic." The day before, Navarra starts warming up her body and voice. Three hours before show time she'll paint on Rivers's high cheekbones and almond-shaped eyes. While Rivers has had considerable plastic surgery during the two decades Navarra has played her, Navarra compensates by using makeup and capturing Rivers's "energy." "I'm not fond of being cut," Navarra says. "It's more that what I say is believable."

» **"A good impersonator** knows how to incorporate acting, writing, and people skills so the audience feels they had an encounter with the celebrity. It's not about putting the exact shade of lipstick on."

» **Navarra estimates** she spends $5,000 to $7,000 a year on makeup, wigs, jewelry, clothes, and dry cleaning.

» **There are two types** of impersonators: character actors like Navarra and "mannequins" (also called "cardboards")—people who are born with the features of a famous person. "That's not what I do. I can't just stand there, because it's disrespectful to the person I represent."

» **Men and women respond** differently to Rivers's signature insult-laced humor, says Navarra. "Women do not want to hear one thing bad about themselves, even if it's farce. Men are comfortable with it because they're more confident."

» **Navarra has read** most of Rivers's books and plans to see *Joan Rivers—A Piece of Work*, the documentary that follows the 77-year-old comedian for a year and hits theaters this month.

» **In 2009, Navarra** worked the VIP after-party for the Joan Rivers roast on Comedy Central. "That was a thrill. Joan was there, and I got to wave and say hi, but I did not want to go up and do material for her. You never know how people feel about being impersonated."

Photograph by DUSTIN SNIPES



Strange Brew

Q: Is it true that there are more medical marijuana stores in L.A. than Starbucks locations?

A: It does seem as if I've been seeing more green crosses than green mermaids lately. In fact, the Kush far outweighs the French roast. The health department lists 166 Starbucks outlets spanning Chatsworth to San Pedro, but the LAPD counts at least 600 pot shops. An ordinance regulating medical marijuana hits the books this month, and city officials say it will cut the number of legal cannabis clubs to 137—restoring equilibrium to the ultrajittery and the superrelaxed.

Q: Is there really a building that houses a giraffe and other circus animals next to the Sylmar juvenile hall off the 210 freeway?

A: I can imagine the guards saying, "You know, if you hadn't ended up in here, you could be out with those animals." Yes, an adult and a young giraffe live in an enclosed olive grove near the jail. They are privately owned, and the older of the two has appeared in movies. Just over the fence, at 16027 Yarnell Street, is the Wildlife Learning Center. More than 200 kid-friendly animals, including servals, squirrel monkeys, and a tree sloth, welcome visitors seven days a week. The center, which cares for rescued and rehabilitated wildlife, also sponsors zoology classes and a day camp.

Q: In the 1800s, did a freed slave own much of downtown along what is now Broadway?

A: Bridget "Biddy" Mason, who lived from 1818 to 1891, was indeed an early booster of downtown development. Brought from Georgia to California, where she was freed, Mason paid $250 saved from work as a midwife for a parcel of land between 3rd and 4th streets and bounded by Spring on the east and an alley along Broadway on the west. In the 25 years she owned the property, L.A.'s population increased tenfold, and the neighborhood of single-story residences, stables, and open space grew into a Victorian-style boomtown. Today you'll find a courtyard named for Mason, along with a time line of her life, sandwiched between a parking garage and a McDonald's.

Q: I don't understand how those lights in the pavement on the 110 freeway are supposed to help direct traffic. They are so bright, I'm surprised they're not causing accidents.

A: Just remember the new Caltrans slogan: "When the lights shine, don't cross the line." In January the northbound 110 at the transition to the 5 north—a notorious bottleneck—became the first highway in California to introduce a "dynamic lane." The LEDs embedded between the lanes are intended to create a center line bright enough to intimidate drivers so they won't cut each other off. The system is still too new for safety statistics.



» Has the city got you stumped? E-mail your questions about life in L.A. to askchris@lamag.com.

Chris's Pick



See you there? From moody sidewalk performances to the stage of REDCAT to those ubiquitous Fandango ads, hip puppets are in every corner of the city. On June 5, hand-, rod-, and string-controlled avatars descend on the McGroarty Arts Center in Tujunga for the Celebrate Puppetry Festival. The beautiful shadow play of the Balinese Wayang Kulit will be featured along with the Bob Baker Marionette Theater. I'm looking forward to puppet world showman Mr. Fabulous and his entourage—sock versions of Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga.

FROM LEFT: ANDRE ARMENANTE; LARRY UNDERHILL

Illustration by ZOHAR LAZAR


Dream big,
Los Angeles.



Matthew Morrison, Kristin Chenoweth, Alan Cumming, and Rita Wilson at "Backstage at the Geffen"



Matt Damon and Luciana Barroso at American Cinematheque



Jennifer Garner at American Cinematheque

Tough Guys

"AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE? I thought they installed your home theater from Best Buy," said Ben Affleck, needling Matt Damon as the actor was feted by the arts preservation group. Charlize Theron, Robin Williams, and Clint Eastwood took turns giving Damon verbal smacks. "I've talked enough," Eastwood concluded, "more than in my last three movies." Eastwood also appeared at the "Backstage at the Geffen" fund-raiser. Hank Azaria (hairless for his upcoming role in the Smurfs movie) and Rita Wilson regaled the crowd with behind-the-scenes dish. Socialite Anne Bass debuted her documentary, *Dancing Across Borders*, at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Center Dance Arts benefited from the event, which was attended by oodles of well-heeled ballet buffs. // KARI MOZENA



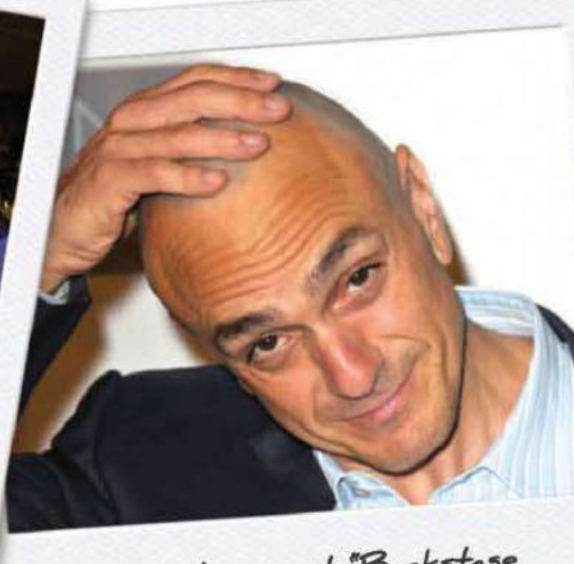
Monique Lhuillier at "Dancing Across Borders"



Charlize Theron at American Cinematheque



Anne Bass, Sokvannara Sar, and Lisa Swayze at "Dancing Across Borders"



Hank Azaria at "Backstage at the Geffen"



Dick Van Dyke and Gil Cates at "Backstage at the Geffen"

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE: PAUL REDMOND/WIREIMAGE (DAMON AND BARROSO, GARNER), STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE (THERON); BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN: JORDAN STRAUSS/WIREIMAGE (MORRISON ET AL), JOHN SHEARER/WIREIMAGE (AZARIA), ALEX J. BERLINER/BEIMAGES (VAN DYKE AND CATES); DANCING ACROSS BORDERS: ALEX J. BERLINER/BEIMAGES


MAKE ROOM(S).

Who: Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne
What: Singer (*Scream*); Judge (*America's Got Talent*)
Where: On the couch in their parlor

What do you give the man who has done everything? A man who helped invent heavy metal as the lead singer of Black Sabbath, who kick-started punk rock with his song "Paranoid," who scared the bejesus out of Middle America in the 1980s by invoking Satan and wearing Tammy Faye Bakker's eyeliner, a man who sang "Born to Be Wild" with Miss Piggy and grew richer than half the Rolling Stones, spending that wealth by living in 28 homes during the last 27 years. What do you give Ozzy Osbourne? Why, your breast implants, of course—repurposed as two lovely paperweights. ¶ "I want these bags out!" Sharon Osbourne announces, squeezing her girls together with »





OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD: (from left) Ozzy Osbourne, whose new album is titled *Scream*, performs in 2005; Sharon Osbourne, a judge on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, with last season's winner

two tiny fists. "I hate them!" "Aw, fuck off, Sharon," replies the 61-year-old Prince of Darkness, summoning his go-to expression—aghast—while scratching the four fingers of his left hand that are roughly tattooed O-Z-Z-Y. "You're out of your fuckin' mind about them paperweights."

Her hair is as purple as the flocked wallpaper, his wrinkled pants and T-shirt as black as his lyrics, and together they sit on an overstuffed couch in the parlor of Hill House, their mansion near Calabasas.

"No," Sharon persists. She's been trumpeting her dissatisfaction with her boobs everywhere lately—on the *Today* show, in British tabloids—and she's not giving up. "Your desk is a mess, Ozzy. And these are absolutely horrible, like an old '60s waterbed flopping around on my chest."

"Oh, fuckin' hell," shrugs Ozzy, realizing once again that he's lost an argument before it has even begun.

Some rock and rollers—Keith Richards, Joe Walsh—you look at and think, "Christ, that guy should have been dead ten years ago." Ozzy you look at and think, "Jiminy, he should have been dead by the age of ten." Sharon, at 57, still glows with the sheen of youth and enhanced collagen. But Ozzy—pale, gaunt, with stringy hair and a slight tremor in his limbs—seems emptied out. He hasn't slowed down, though. *Scream*, his tenth solo album, appears on iTunes this month. His autobiography, *I Am Ozzy*, was released earlier this year. And in August he will open Ozzfest, the metal tour organized by Sharon that is now 14 years old. For a while this summer Sharon will be pulling double duty as her husband's manager and as a judge on *America's Got Talent*.

"It's fuckin' crazy," Ozzy says of his wife's growing fame, which has included hosting her own talk show and competing on *The Apprentice*. "She works every fuckin' waking hour in some other town. I don't understand it."

"I feel guilty if I don't work," Sharon says.

"Not me," says Ozzy. "The kids are gone, and I sit here and watch the History Channel. I have Adolf Hitler's family now for company."

Sharon rolls her eyes. "He even knows Adolf's neighbors by name."

* * * * *

In the past Ozzy paid a high price for his own excesses: cocaine, quaaludes, glue, heroin, LSD, cough syrup, Rohypnol, Vicodin, Klonopin, Harvey Wallbangers (once his cocktail of choice), and methylene chloride (once his industrial degreaser of choice). He was booted out of Sabbath, ejected from a tour of the concentration camp Dachau for being drunk and disorderly, and arrested for urinating on the Alamo. Early on, at the Betty Ford Center, he tried rehab but found the concept unintelligible. When the former first lady greeted Ozzy at the door, he replied, "Betty...terrible flight. Where's the bar?" At his health's nadir Ozzy learned that he had tested positive for HIV. A second test, after a review of the near-fatal amounts of alcohol and cocaine in his blood, was negative.

"So I really don't have HIV?" Ozzy asked his physician. The doctor said no, adding, "But your body thinks it does."

Today he is clean and sober, standing stronger than the medieval castle—the record industry—he had a hand in building. Back in the 1970s, the same industry had brought him together with Sharon, who helped manage bands like the Electric Light Orchestra. She had followed her father, a manager who worked with Little Richard and Chuck Berry, into the business. Don Arden was a brawler who socialized with mobsters and wielded a gun, and "Vegetable"—as Arden nicknamed Ozzy—didn't scare Sharon.

Sitting in the parlor that Sharon calls "19th-century French" and Ozzy calls "very expensive"—carved chairs, ceiling-high cabinetry, silver-framed photos of dogs—one realizes that the arc of the couple's lives traces the arc of rock and roll. Yet it wasn't until MTV created the reality-TV hit *The Osbournes*, in 2002, that Ozzy discovered true rock-star fame.

"We'd be at the farmers' market," says Ozzy, "and in ten seconds everyone would turn on me with their cameras. I'd never experienced anything like that before!"

Doors long bolted tight against the Osbournes began creaking open. Even President George W. Bush had them to dinner.

"Suddenly I'm at a fund-raiser," says Ozzy, aghast, "and there's Larry King, there's Tony Bennett, there's Elton John."

"If it had been a party invite to Ozzy from Ozzfest," says Sharon, "and not Ozzy from *The Osbournes*, it would have been..."

"It would have been one fuckin' drunk alone in the corner," says Ozzy.

Like *Seinfeld*, *The Osbournes* succeeded because it was a show about nothing (and because Ozzy's speech patterns were more baffling than *Lost*). Along with kids Jack and Kelly (their eldest, Aimee, didn't appear), they became the first family of reality TV.

The show was, of course, nothing like the couple's true lives, the domestic carnage they'd suffered for decades. After Ozzy married Sharon in 1982, he made a vow: no more cocaine and shotguns in the house. He kept his promise about the guns. But while using drugs, Ozzy beat Sharon until her eyes were welded shut, knocked out her front teeth, attacked her when she was pregnant, and dislocated her jaw. Sharon was a formidable opponent. She threw television sets at Ozzy, smashed his gold records, slit her wrists and screamed, "*This is what you are doing to me!*" In 1989, Ozzy was charged with the attempted murder of Sharon by strangulation. But Sharon dropped the charges.

It's difficult to know what's more incredible: that Ozzy survived himself or that the Osbournes survived each other. (Sharon, meanwhile, also beat colon cancer a few years ago.) "It's not always good," says Ozzy, shrugging and looking away. "Some days we fight and don't talk. But we got through all of that." The two former outsiders, however, ended up shifting the American zeitgeist. Throwing up on the Jersey shore has replaced rock and roll as the quickest route for yobs seeking fame. Today we all live in the land of Oz.

"It's fucking crazy," laments Ozzy. "With reality shows, no one's got talent anymore."

"The hook today for being a huge celebrity," says Sharon, "is having eight babies, or big tits, or you got to be a train wreck."

"It really says something about society, doesn't it?" muses Ozzy. "It's not like Lady Gaga. I love her."

"Oh, Gaga has talent," agrees Sharon.

"Gaga!" screams Ozzy. "*Gaagaahhhh!!!*" ■

PAGE 43: LARSEN & TALBERT/ICON INTERNATIONAL. THIS PAGE (FROM LEFT): KEN MCKAY/REX USA/BEIMAGES; TRAE PATTON/NBC





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West 3rd Street

A slew of vibrant new spots is reason enough to go back and stroll this favorite indie shopping destination BY SARA WILSON

Zipping between Fairfax Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard, you may mistake the road for any other thoroughfare. But for more than a decade West 3rd Street has functioned as an open-air mall of independent boutiques and neighborhood hangouts (people walk from store to store, not just to their cars). Need a stylish birthday gift or a quick gourmet bite? The strip is fail-safe. (There's a reason New York's Magnolia Bakery opens here this month.) The recession struck a blow to the area, but recent arrivals are giving it a face-lift. We focused on the stretch near the intersection of South Orlando Avenue.





1

Izaka-Ya by Katsu-Ya

Book a reservation at this popular restaurant, or you'll be watching others devour small plates from a menu of Japanese pub fare. Try some of the best sushi in town or dishes like foie gras on Kobe beef, sautéed Japanese *kabocha*, and miso cod. » 8420 W. 3rd St., 323-782-9536 or katsu-yagroup.com.

2

Le Labo

We didn't plan to spend our weekly grocery budget on a candle at this Parisian-style apothecary, but the stripped-down aesthetic, hand-hewn sensibility, and understated cool of the East Coast-based brand can be seductive. Eleven fragrances, including the in-store exclusive "Los Angeles" scent, are displayed on cast-iron tables and made to order. » 8385 W. 3rd St., 323-782-0411 or lelabofragrances.com.

3

Elaine Kim

The cement floors and whitewashed walls of this modern women's clothing shop, a recent addition to the block, create an ambience that's more art gallery than retail outfit. From her back room studio, designer-owner Kim turns out only a few pieces at a time—the equivalent of limited-edition prints. Menswear-influenced tailoring and unexpected juxtapositions (supple leather bands running the length of body-hugging, draped chiffon dresses) make for a quietly sexy and instantly covetable collection. » 8373 W. 3rd St., 323-937-0355 or elainekim.com.

MAP: MICHAEL NEWHOUSE

Photographs by MINDEE CHOI



4

Eggy
If the Marni label launched a kids' line, this boutique, which stocks clothes for little ones up to age six, would sell it. The goods are sophisticated (muted colors, Euro labels) but not precious and will have all customers—not just the teething ones—drooling. » 8365 W. 3rd St., 323-658-8882 or shopeggy.com.





5

Traveler's Bookcase
At this bookshop there are guidebooks and maps for virtually every destination, along with literature set in far-flung locales. The husband-and-wife owners, who have traveled to more than 100 countries, pick up items you won't find elsewhere. They also carry the hyperlocal *À la Carte* maps—beautifully illustrated insider primers on well-trod cities. » 8375 W. 3rd St., 323-655-0575 or travelbooks.com.

6

Polkadots & Moonbeams
Thrift-store denizens have been visiting this repository of midpriced vintage clothing since 1982. They're still on the prowl (read: you'd better grab that A-line dress before *Mad Men*'s costume designer does). Contemporary clothing at a second location can be had a few doors down. » 8367 W. 3rd St., 323-651-1746; 8381 W. 3rd St., 323-655-3880; or polkadotsand moonbeams.com.



7

Magnolia Bakery
The decadent bakery that Carrie Bradshaw et al made famous comes to the neighborhood this month. Now you can see what all the fuss was about while quelling butter cream frosting urges. » 8389 W. 3rd St., 323-951-0636 or magnoliabakery.com.

8

Plastica
The utilitarian quality of plastic informs the colorful selection of well-designed home and office goods. Other materials are represented, too, such as canvas in totes from France and cotton and linen in Marimekko tea towels from Finland. » 8405 W. 3rd St., 323-655-1051 or plastica shop.com.

9

Joan's on Third
With its black-and-white decor, array of prepared foods, and stainless steel shelves full of gourmet products, this larder is L.A.'s version of San Francisco's Boulettes. It's been a fixture for more than a decade, but nabbing a seat during the lunch rush can still be trickier than finding weekend beach parking. The cafeteria-style setup makes the ever-expanding offerings seem inexpensive (with "seem" being the operative word). A new menu of hot dinners, available from 3 to 8 p.m., gives us an excuse to visit twice a day. » 8350 W. 3rd St., 323-655-2285 or joansonthird.com.



Just the facts: Local landmark: Beverly Center, at La Cienega. **Eye-opening treatment:** At the girly Benefit Cosmetics shop, opt for the $40 "Trio"—a brow-and-lash makeover that includes brow waxing as well as tinting for lashes and brows. **Play date:** The Hands-on 3rd studio holds six- to eight-person crafting workshops for everyone from kids to new moms to aspiring milliners. **Public option:** A new valet service ($4) means that parking on the street is no longer a headache; look for the guys in the orange T-shirts dotting the curbs.

ICON: PETER HOEY


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Gracie, the canine of couture home furnishings, relaxes in front of the Pimlico Bed and Edward Nightchests from the Grace Home Collection.



Jason Murakawa

VINTAGE TABLEWARE SUPPLIER | HOME: DOWNTOWN ARTS DISTRICT

Bon appétit: If at a swank dinner you observe that the plates are 150-year-old Haviland china and the vases have been fashioned from 17th-century dessert glasses, you have likely entered the world of Jason Murakawa. **Party animal:** Last year Murakawa started Small Masterpiece, which combines his passion for vintage European and American dishware, glassware, and flatware and his experience throwing benefit galas. A graphic designer by trade (he has created the album art for more than 30 soundtrack CDs), Murakawa disapproved of most dish rental options. Getting no results when he Googled "antique dish rentals," he deduced that Small Masterpiece could be the country's only source. **Trad meets rad:** "I set traditional things in a nontraditional way," says Murakawa, who owns some 1,500 pieces. "I mix and match. There's no difference in size between a water glass and a wineglass. Still, the collection is tightly curated, so there's a unified look to it." **Home and away:** Event planners in New York and San Francisco have sought Murakawa out. His motto? Have goblets, will travel. » Go to smallmasterpiece.com. // LAURIE PIKE

Photograph by CORAL VON ZUMWALT


n
north lake tahoe
n is for north
Between slow burn sunups and the first hint of the Big Dipper, North Lake Tahoe is always on stage, from high mountain trails to concerts in the pines to a lake laced with golden beaches and waters as clear as the message that says, "come live". All made more beautiful with its great values. Visit us online for Cool Deals and more information on our multiple daily non-stop flights and convenient airport shuttle.
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» Chic-a-Boo

The signature lattice design on Dior's "Canage Woven Bootie" in patent calfskin makes the shoe ideal for hot summer nights. » $990 at Dior, Beverly Hills, 310-859-4700.



» In Focus

Local eyewear company Sire customizes frames in sustainable woods: The "Dylan Thomas" (top) comes in zebrano, the "Moorea" (left) in bubinga, and the "Moorea" (right) in Italian ebony. » $695 at Traffic Women, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-659-3438.

Prime Finds

» Our favorite items hitting stores now

BY LAURIE PIKE AND CAROLINE CAGNEY



» Cream Gem

An update of the product every woman kept on her vanity, Bulgari's "Baume Merveilleux" firms and hydrates. » $280 (50 ml) at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, 310-550-5900.

» Fierce Forearm

Sex up an understated outfit with Jenny Bird's fetishistic leather-and-chains wrap bracelet. » $125 at Traffic Women, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-659-3438.



» Into the Fold

Combat June gloom by generating your own sunshine with Coach's "Kristin" croc-embossed leather clutch. » $348 at Coach, Beverly Hills, 310-247-1309.





» Bubble Up

The egglike Ovopur uses a filter of carbon, zinc, quartz, and copper to purify water. » $759 at A+R, Venice, 310-392-9128.

SUNGLASSES: MINDEE CHOI. STYLIST: MICHELLE WEAVER



» Belt It Out

With distressed leather and vintage-looking hardware, the "Double Buckle BC" briefcase, by Culver City-based Winter Bros., is worthy of a modern Sam Spade. » $450 at Coutula, Venice, 310-581-8010.



» Sea Scape

MAC's "Marine Life" pressed powder, part of its "To the Beach" summer collection, brings the ocean's shimmer to your face. » $26 at MAC, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-659-6201.



» Social Fabric

In Etro's triple-strand necklace, beads made of silk mix with ones made of resin. » $333 at Etro, Beverly Hills, 310-248-2855.



» Power Points

Look sharp in camillajames's silver plate and rhinestone "Atomic Spike" earrings. » $188 at Intermix, L.A., 310-860-0113.





» Candy Cotton

Façonnable's brightly striped cotton shirt will juice up your businesswear. » $155 at Façonnable, Beverly Hills, 310-247-8277.



» Tyke Triptych

This wood tricycle by Wishbone converts to a two-wheeler, and its height can be adjusted for kids up to age five. » $250 at Giggle, Pasadena, 626-744-0233.

BRIEFCASE, NECKLACE, SHIRT: MINDEE CHOI. STYLIST: MICHELLE WEAVER


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Family Reserve
GROUND
BREAKFAST BLEND

[RETAIL]

Finger-Tapping Time



With boutiques scaling back on merchandise, the waiting list returns

The day Greg Simonian, the CEO of Westime, got back to his West L.A. office from a watch trade show, customer requests for something he'd just seen unveiled—Chanel's "Mystère" J12 ceramic timepiece—were already in his in-box. The only downside was that Simonian won't get his small allotment of the $278,000 item until November. So he drew up a waiting list. It isn't the only one at Westime: Clients are impatiently expecting the arrival of everything from six-figure Audemars Piguet styles to $5,000 Bell and Ross watches. "It's a war zone," says Simonian. "Customers literally fight to have us take a deposit."

The many retailers dusting off and discounting months-old inventory would love to have Simonian's problem—and his wealthy, obsessed clientele. But the waiting list has made a comeback for some less rarefied goods, too—not only because the economy is on the mend but, counterintuitively, because of its recent fall. Stores chopped their merchandise orders in 2009, adjusting for lower demand. In some cases, they underestimated the public's willingness to spend. In April a $5,700 Bottega Veneta picnic tote was wait-listed at Saks Fifth Avenue in Beverly Hills. "Like most retailers, we are carefully managing our inventory, so hot items will blow out quickly," says Saks representative Kari Miller.

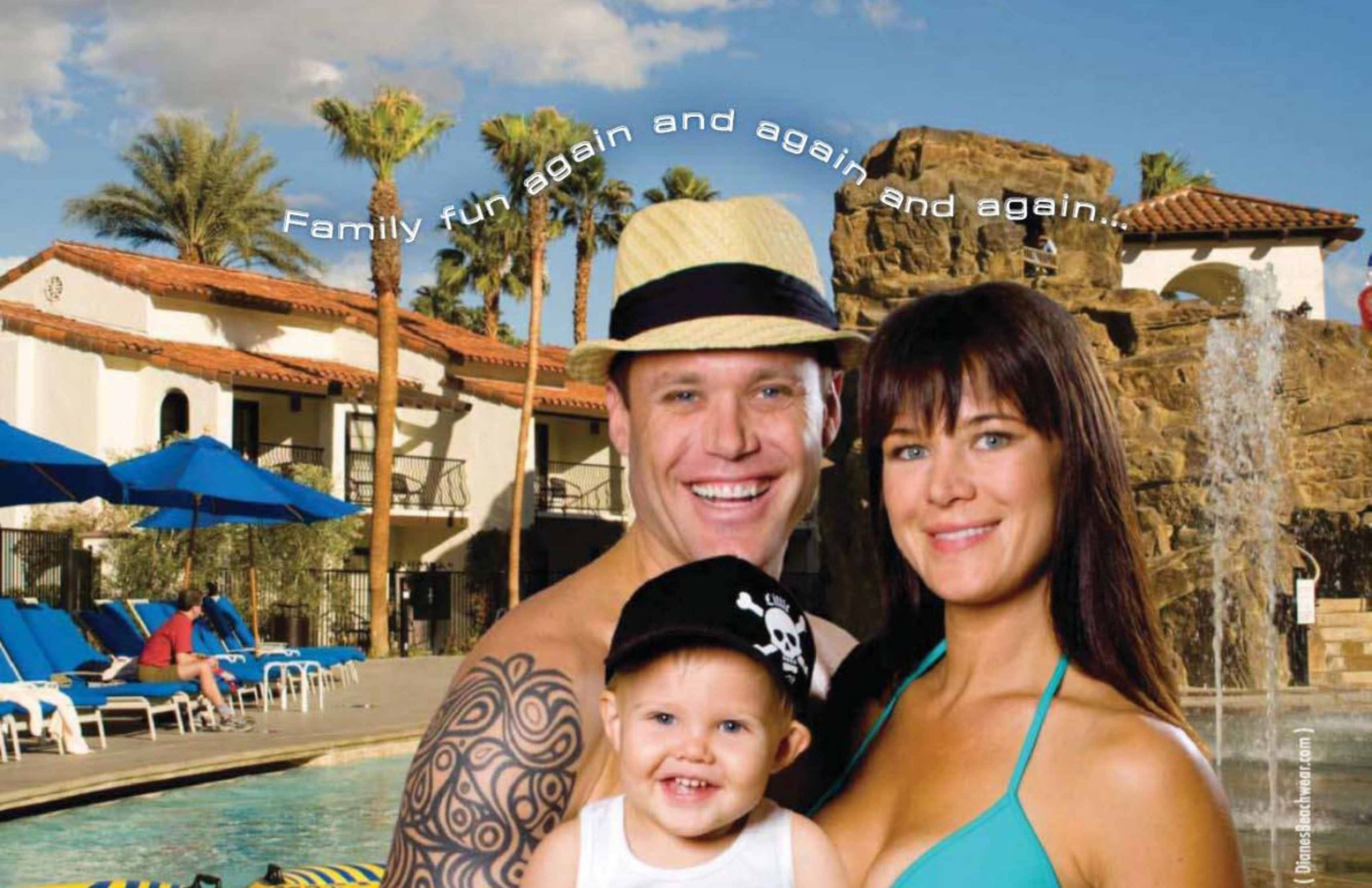
A splashy advertising campaign (like Dolce & Gabbana's cosmetics spreads featuring Scarlett Johansson) or a runway trend (such as taupe nail polish) can lead to a rush on goods. But even evergreen items, like Chanel's "2.55" quilted handbag, can be perennially back-ordered, as they are at Saks. For cult designers, who produce in small batches, entire collections are wait-listed. "People want Dries Van Noten and Sofie D'Hoore the minute it comes in," says Julien Heart, owner of the Santa Monica boutique Weathervane. "They say, 'Call me, call me, call me.' And the next day there's a line of people outside when we come to open the store." // L.P.



What's in Store

Tiziana mixes celeb-led lines (Nicole Richie's House of Harlow 1960, Gwen Stefani's L.A.M.B.) with labels such as New York's Heike Jarick and L.A.'s Karen Zambos. » *1767 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz, 323-663-3370.* Billing itself as a concept store, **Armani Exchange** has taken the place of Armani Casa. The uniqueness lies as much in the space as in the sportswear. » *157 N. Robertson Blvd., L.A., 310-270-4322.* The Jensen Recreation Center, built in the 1920s, is home to a new kind of community gathering. **E.P.I.C.** (Echo Park Independent Co-op) features local designers and music and art shows. » *1712 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213-483-0260.* // L.P.

Illustration by SANNA MANDER


Family fun again and again and again...
Photography: KENNA LOVE
Apparel and Accessories: DIANE'S BEACHWEAR AT THE RIVER, RANCHO MIRAGE (DianesBeachwear.com)



TOOTHSOME: Sanguine lovers Sookie and Bill, played by Anna Paquin and Stephen Moyer

ANDY RYAN/CORBIS OUTLINE

Fatal Attraction

HBO's *True Blood* enters its third season, and the undead are as saucy as ever

The vampire is a fantasy born of a time when sex was dangerous. Except for the years between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s, that's been all the time, of course, and as the culture would have it, never more so than now. This month HBO's *True Blood* begins its third season, continuing the adventures of orphaned waitress Sookie Stackhouse, who pursues an affair with her vampire lover while beset by an unwelcome talent for telepathy and maybe a few other exotic gifts that she's still catching on to 24 episodes later. To mix my monster metaphors, *True Blood* is the Frankenstein of vampire stories. If it's an assemblage of various books and movies and shows—the Southern gothic of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, the irony and post-modernism of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the violent Americana and revelrous bloodletting (with their implied connection) of Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark*, the undercurrent of barely constrained sexual hysteria running through Francis Coppola's early-'90s interpretation of *Dracula*, and the catalytic attraction between a virginal young woman and an undead heartthrob trying to mind his manners in *Twilight*—*True Blood*'s erogenous zone comes from all of them.

The notion of a parasitic demon that survives its own





PLASMA SCREEN: (clockwise from top left) Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *Twilight: New Moon*—strands of each can be found in *True Blood*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COLUMBIA PICTURES/PHOTOFEST; THE WB/PHOTOFEST; COURTESY SUMMIT ENTERTAINMENT

death, trapped in an earthbound purgatory and feeding off the living, has been around since the Old Testament, but it wasn't until the 1700s that the vampire fable took form. Somewhere in eastern Europe, in the wake of some plague or other, death moved too fast for the grave diggers to keep up, and people were accosted by the daily spectacle of what a mess the human body makes once it shuts down. Though in fact vampires were the stuff of literature at least half a century before Irish novelist Bram Stoker came along, showing up in the work of Goethe and Coleridge, Stoker's *The Undead*, retitled *Dracula* on the eve of its publication at the hinge of the 19th and 20th centuries, is the obvious landmark. *Dracula* tapped into a British paranoia that doesn't mean much to us now: Maybe less irrational than prescient, what with the Nazi siege 50 years later, the English were convinced that an onslaught of the Other, be it German, French, or an incursion that couldn't be named, was poised to overwhelm their small island. But Stoker hit another Victorian nerve, too: the sexual repression of the age. Of course there's been something sexual about the vampire all along—that Old Testament incarnation was Lilith in the Book of Isaiah, visiting men in their aroused, bed-tossed sleep to drink them dry—but whatever the precedent, with *Dracula* sex and death, the two hot wires of the psyche, were touched together and fused, and sex turned from life force into death force, oblivion rendered as orgasmic as it is annihilating.

As orgasmic as it gets, *True Blood* takes place in the torrid Louisiana swamplands. From F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* in 1922 to Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula* and beyond, however, the vampire has largely inhabited frigid English, German, and Scandinavian nights, repression's fever dream edging toward more explicit evocations of the forbidden. By the '50s, the pictures coming out of the U.K.'s











Hammer studio featured increasingly pneumatic actresses in ever-tighter bodices for undead aristocrats to ravish. It's not an accident that the one period during which the vampire had little resonance for American audiences was the late '60s and '70s, a singular time in human history when, the stray venereal disease aside, sexual behavior was devoid of consequence. Labor and childbirth were no longer lethal endeavors, and with the widespread use of the birth control pill, pregnancy wasn't a risk. Several millennia of value judgments attached to sex suddenly were less threatening, moral fears vanishing almost as immediately as the mortal ones; and during this era the filmmakers of more relaxed cultures—the Belgian Harry Kümel with *Daughters of Darkness* and the French Jean Rollin with *The Rape of the Vampire*, *Lips of Blood*, and *Fascination*—discovered the vampire story as a vehicle for pushing erotic expression toward the uninhibited, even the surreal. In the '80s, AIDS restored peril to sex on an apocalyptic scale, and with 1987's *The Lost Boys*, the vampire myth found a contemporary context in a frustrated adolescence that felt cheated of paradise. In Coppola's baroque and slightly berserk 1992 *Dracula*, juices flowed, colors popped narcotically, and Gary Oldman portrayed the Count as a Baudelairean Rolling Stone the band kicked out because he was too weird. The shambles of its last third notwithstanding, it was Coppola's best film since his '70s heyday; without anyone noticing, it also was the most commercially successful vampire movie made up to that point.

* * * * *

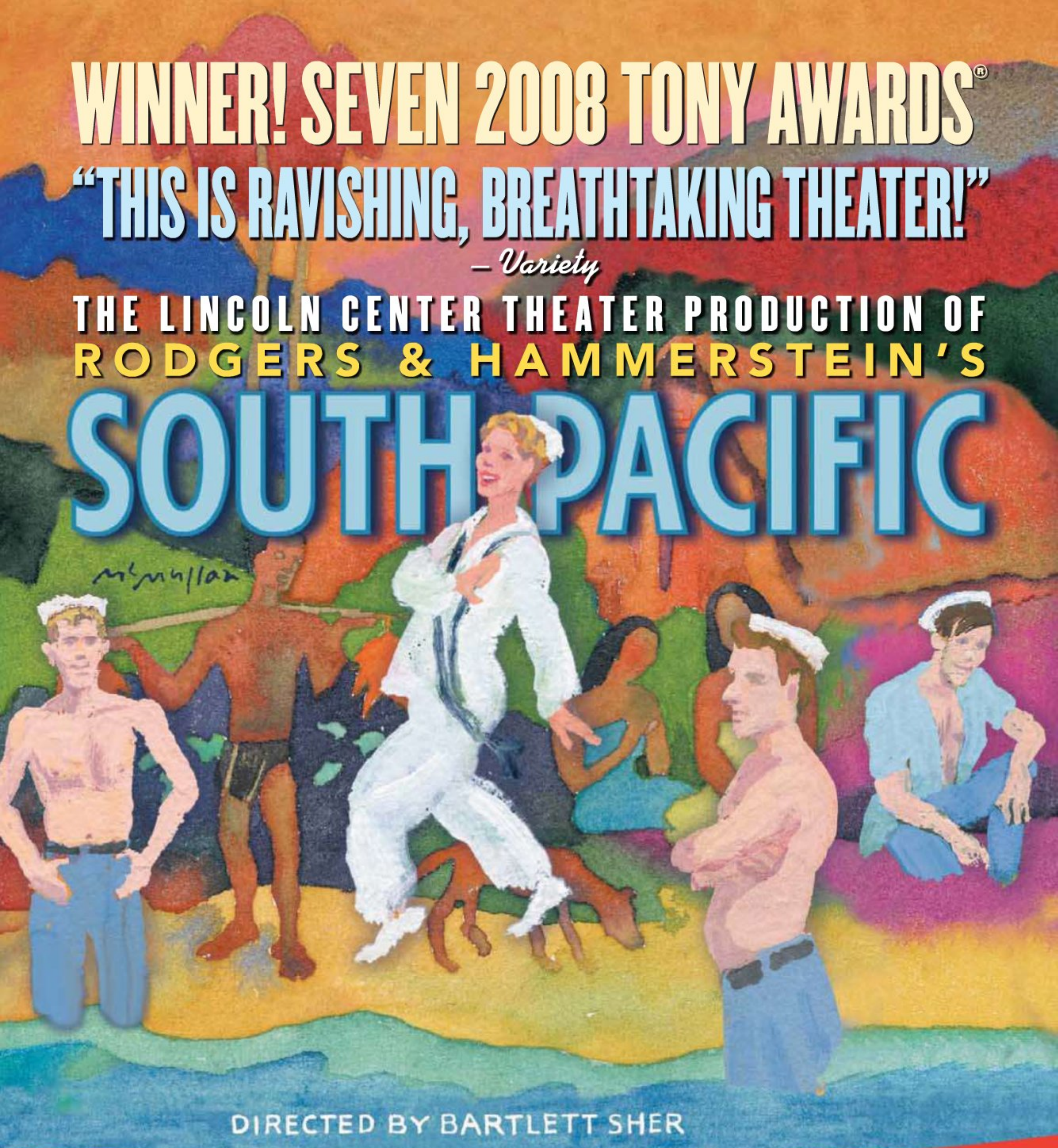
True Blood had a mixed reception when it initially aired two years ago, before going on to become HBO's biggest hit since *The Sopranos*. Created by writer and producer Alan Ball, its original contribution to the genre lies in the satirical: In an alternative America, vampires have "come out of the coffin" and now lobby for their civil liberties (including the right to marry the un-undead) to the dismay of the rest of the country, not least the populace of "Bon Temps," where the series is set. Intolerance, legal quandaries, and esoteric social rituals abound. A synthetic bottled blood on which the vampire segment survives, presumably in lieu of slurping up the real thing, is carried in bars and liquor stores, and a drug called "V," derived from blood drained from unwilling vampires, is the new illicit hallucinogen. An immigrant wave of supernaturals has overrun the landscape, like the local saloon keeper who can turn into a dog, and a vengeful Dionysian who casts the town under her spell (TV's go-to ballbuster Michelle Forbes, seen a few years back in *Battlestar Galactica* as an interstellar Captain Bligh). Immature, disapproving, laying lots of trips on everyone else when she's not screwing up things herself, our heroine Sookie is played so openheartedly and winningly by Anna Paquin that sometimes we almost ignore what a pain in the ass she is. Those familiar with Ball's résumé won't be surprised that, like Sookie herself, the show is all over the place tonally, by turns goofy and intense; Ball created HBO's *Six Feet Under*, establishing his preoccupation with death, after writing the 1999 Oscar winner *American Beauty*. The best and most reliable thing about *True Blood* is its trashiness,

With *Dracula*, sex and death, the hot wires of the psyche, were fused, and sex turned from life force into death force, oblivion rendered as orgasmic as it is annihilating.

and its one constant is that vampirism no longer is a metaphor for sex but rather the other way around. Starting with the title sequence—a montage of mortification and frenzy comprising images of naked bodies and crazed baptisms and slinky lap dancers and Venus flytraps and decomposing animals flashing by fast enough to be almost subliminal—*True Blood* has sex on the brain so much that when I watched the DVD recently on an airplane, I had to keep peering around to make sure little kids weren't looking over my shoulder.

It's a measure of how perfunctory the sexual abandon has become in *True Blood* that, confronted late in the second season by the biggest orgy scene this side of Vivid Entertainment, I felt kind of blasé about it. I can't believe I'm saying this, but dramatically *True Blood* could probably do with a little less sex and a little more dread of damnation. Its determination to exhaust the vampire myth's every carnal implication is blinding the show to other creative possibilities, unless there's a plot turn at hand in the third season that I'm not anticipating; when we last saw them, Sookie and her lover, Bill—the single wittiest thing about *True Blood* may be that, after all the Vlads and Lestats and Angels and Edwards in the lore, the lead vampire here is just "Bill"—found their engagement immediately derailed by an abduction, which left me only annoyed and wondering how much further I want to go with it. Like that of Edward and Bella in *Twilight* (it should be noted that, as *True Blood* predates *Twilight*, Charlaine Harris's *Southern Vampires Mysteries*, on which *True Blood* is based, predates the Stephenie Meyers series), it has not taken long for the Sookie-Bill narrative to start running out of steam sometime around their third or fourth breakup and reconciliation. *True Blood*'s most compelling recent thread concerns a Jesus-like vampire named Godric, who sacrificed himself to the sun last season for the sake of bringing peace between the undead and the living, and I'm hoping for Godric's resurrection in season three and a vampire Christianity, and whatever odd ideas of salvation that might entail. It will only make the sex more dangerous, of course, not less. After a flirtation or two with transcendence, I'll be ready for another orgy. ■

The single wittiest thing about *True Blood* may be that, after all the Vlads and Lestats and Angels and Edwards in the lore, the lead vampire here is just "Bill."


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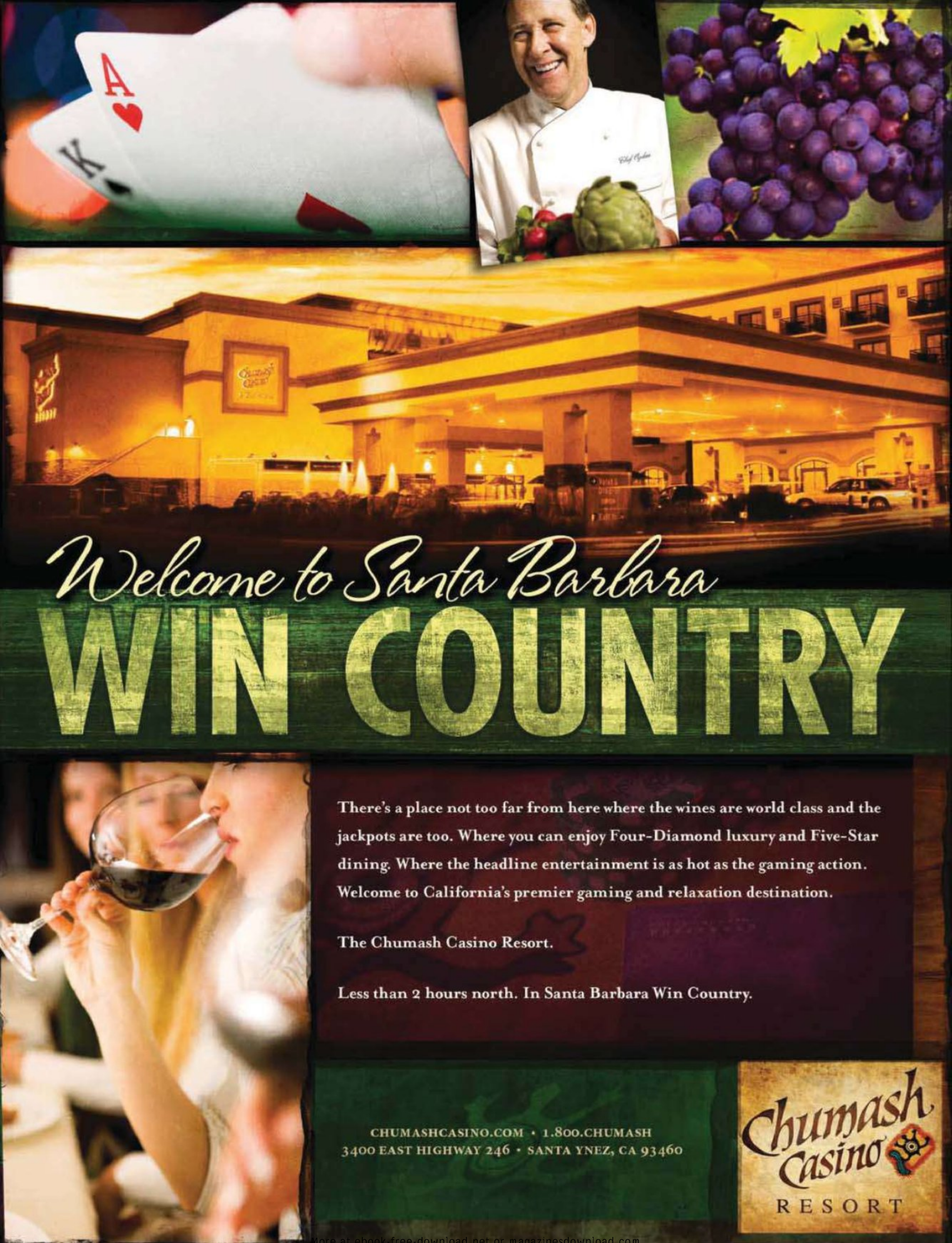
Home Wrecker

Sherman Oaks investment broker Bruce Friedman made millions swindling clients before the feds shut him down

Bruce Friedman will never be as notorious as Bernard Madoff, but federal authorities discovered that for several years he held the same line of work: scamming people out of their life savings. On March 4, 2009, just a few days before Madoff pleaded guilty on 11 felony counts in connection with his massive Ponzi scheme, Friedman was accused by the Securities and Exchange Commission of stealing millions of dollars from investors—also through a Ponzi scheme—and spending it on luxuries that included a $6.5 million Malibu home, a $245,000 Bentley, and hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of jewelry. Many of Friedman's victims, like Madoff's, are elderly and will probably never recoup their retirement savings. As of early spring, less than two cents on the dollar had been recovered.

"A lot of us got snookered into this," says Jama Bowlby, a retiree from Constantine, Michigan. She and her husband, Orrin (a three-time cancer survivor), lost their house and 16 acres of farmland to

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foreclosure—all because they listened to a local insurance broker who kept coming back with a pitch that would have had their house paid off in a few years by investing in Diversified Lending Group, Friedman's Sherman Oaks-based firm. The Bowlbys were reluctant, but they checked out Friedman on the Internet and through the Better Business Bureau. "We never found a bad thing about this company," Bowlby says. "We thought, Well, maybe this is the route we should go—pay it off, and when it's done, have a little extra money in the bank."

So they had their home refinanced, with Diversified receiving $100,000 worth of the equity and agreeing to make monthly mortgage payments. For about a year it seemed to be working. Then came word that the SEC was charging Friedman with fraud and that a federal judge was freezing the assets of Diversified Lending, effectively shutting down the operation. The Bowlbys couldn't begin to assume the payments because as part of the refinancing, their monthly mortgage had more than doubled, to around $1,000 (the bank turned down their request for a loan modification). And the $100,000? "It's a total disaster," says Bowlby, telling me that they're in the process of moving out of their house and into a two-bedroom mobile home in nearby Sturgis. "A lifetime of work for nothing."

What's remarkable about this story is just how unremarkable it is in the world of Ponzi schemes. Investors are recruited, money is raised, payouts are made, and eventually the enterprise becomes so large that it can no longer be supported. The fraud falls apart even faster during an economic downturn, when there aren't enough new investors in the pipeline. As authorities took over Diversified Lending's offices on the 12th floor of a Ventura Boulevard office building, changing the locks and obtaining computer passwords, they discovered that the firm had no listing of assets, no record of paying state or federal taxes, and no financial statements other than several incomplete electronic checkbooks. Only by subpoenaing bank records did the court-appointed receiver, David Gill, begin to piece together the scheme.

He's still determining how much Friedman, who is 60 and lives in the San Fernando Valley, has made off with, but it's easily more than $40 million. Hundreds of people got hit, mostly from Southern California, Michigan, Ohio, Florida, Texas, and Arkansas. What infuriates many of the investors is that Friedman will not go to trial on the charges. The SEC has settled with him—all that's left is calculating how much money he'll be able to return and negotiating a civil penalty. Criminal charges remain a possibility—the FBI and Justice Department have been conducting interviews—though a higher threshold of proof would be required than for the SEC's civil case. That was easy with Madoff (he pleaded guilty and is serving 150 years), but it's harder when evidence or testimony cannot prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Many of the investors have attorneys who are trying to get back what they can, not by suing Friedman—he's pretty much tapped out—but by focusing on the middlemen who sold the notes on behalf of Diversified.

Diversified Lending had no listing of assets, no record of paying taxes, and no financial statements other than several incomplete electronic checkbooks.

It's a cliché in this post-Madoff world, but Friedman certainly didn't look the part. With his bulky build, salt-and-pepper hair, and conservative wardrobe, he could have passed for any of the thousands of other businessmen in town peddling investment strategies. "A real charming guy," says one lawyer who has had frequent conversations with him. "He would be perfectly able to sit there and convince you that the moon is blue." Investors who dealt with him directly say he seemed sharp and could persuasively answer their questions. "A lot of scam artists think that they're smarter than anyone else, and at some point they develop kind of a God complex where they believe they can't be caught," says Ken Yormark, who specializes in forensic accounting with the consulting firm LECG, which is based in Emeryville, California.

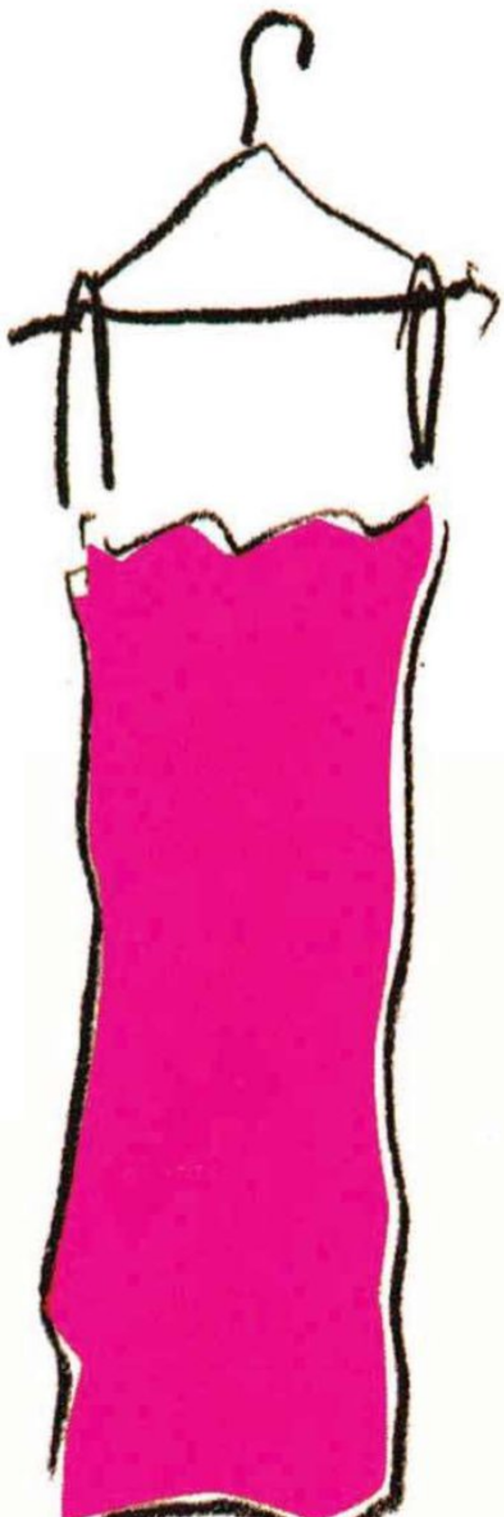
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Ponzi schemes are almost always about lies and omissions—one layered on top of another. For Friedman, who declined to be interviewed, it started with describing Diversified Lending in sales literature as a "boutique mortgage banking firm with more than 80 years' experience" (the firm opened in 2004). Promissory notes offering annual returns of 9 or 12 percent were guaranteed by Diversified (you can't guarantee something without providing adequate collateral, which Friedman didn't do). A network of insurance agents sold Diversified notes to investors (the agents weren't registered to sell securities). The firm's auditor was listed as the American Accounting Association (which is actually a research organization that

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doesn't audit companies). Diversified claimed that its assets totaled $655.7 million (cash receipts for the firm's entire existence amounted to $255.5 million, mostly from investor deposits). "The representations made to investors were never remotely true," Gill said in a report.

Friedman spent wildly—among the line items found by the receiver were $80,000 at the Reef Atlantis resort in Nassau, $27,500 at Nordstrom, $50,000 in Dodgers tickets, and tens of thousands of dollars for private planes. He gave $275,000 to a woman in Scottsdale, whom the SEC complaint described as his girlfriend. Another $800,000 went toward the production of *Rock Prophecies*, a 2009 documentary about the photographer Robert M. Knight (Friedman is listed as an executive producer), and $26 million was used to buy MRI equipment for a health care company. Virtually none of the money he received was invested in real estate, which supposedly was Diversified Lending's main business.

Aside from spending money on himself, Friedman had a less obvious side—that of a budding philanthropist. A year or two into his run at Diversified he started his own charitable foundation, which, according to its Web site, "encourages youths to attain higher levels of education and use that increased knowledge to advance a greater understanding and desire to improve the society in which they live." His first big donation was the $1 million he and his wife, Wendy, gave to construct a park in Calabasas for special-needs children. The park had been the inspiration of his sister-in-law, the mother of a disabled youngster. "I said 'I need a million dollars' really flippantly, like it was 50 cents, and he said 'OK.' I was shocked," Dina Kaplan told *The Jewish Journal* in 2006. For their gift the Friedmans' names were engraved on the Wall of Honor at Calabasas City Hall. Friedman also established scholarship funds for students in the Los Angeles Unified School District and pledged up to $5 million to help the Dodger Dream Foundation build 42 youth baseball fields. Just months before the SEC suit, he made an anonymous $10 million gift to the financially struggling Children's Museum of Los Angeles, money that was to have spearheaded construction of a new building. When that check never came, the museum was forced into bankruptcy.

The question you might be asking is, How did he get away with his scheme for so long? His was no small fraud—lots of players and deals were getting commingled, and increasing amounts of money were required to prevent Diversified from collapsing on itself. Besides, Friedman had a criminal record. In 1981, he was convicted of grand theft and served 23 months in prison for stealing $300,000 from Avery International Corporation, the Pasadena-based maker of labels and self-adhesive products. None of this was hidden; it's just that no one had any reason to ask questions. People thought Diversified was making money. Friedman only acknowledged his record—along with an old bankruptcy filing—in late 2008, when authorities began snooping around and chat rooms like Scam.com were filling up with concerns. "This whole thing stinks to high heaven," wrote one person whose parents had invested $250,000. Someone else added, "I looked into this organization 18 months ago. I was extremely skeptical at that time, and am even more so now that the economy is in such trouble."

In Ponzi schemes, investors are recruited, money is raised, payouts are made, and eventually the enterprise becomes so large that it can no longer be supported.

A lot of other Ponzi schemes had been falling apart, and typically for the same reason: Not enough money was coming in, and too much was going out. In 2009, the Associated Press reported more than 150 of them in the United States had failed, up from about 40 a year earlier. The SEC doesn't break out statistics for its separate offices, but Rosalind Ramsey Tyson, director of the L.A. region, tells me that "enforcement cases are up across the board, particularly with respect to Ponzi schemes." There's no shortage of local examples posted on the SEC Web site: a scam targeting retired L.A. bus drivers, another one that used a Farsi-language radio program to recruit Iranian American investors, and still another that coaxed California retirees into buying promissory notes for "investments" in Turkish Eurobonds.

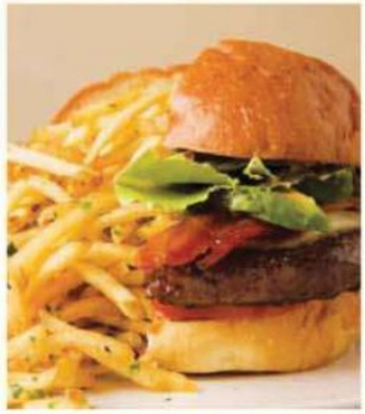
I suppose folks believe what they want to believe. With retirees and near-retirees desperately looking for income-producing investments after the stock market collapse, and with 12-month CD rates running about 0.6 percent, an annual 12 percent guaranteed return might look tempting. I've even heard that some investors figure they can find a Ponzi scheme and play along by putting in their money early and pulling it out early, before the pyramid collapses. The reasoning is immoral and flawed, but in a Ponzi culture, everyone's a potential mark. Just ask the Bowlbys. ■











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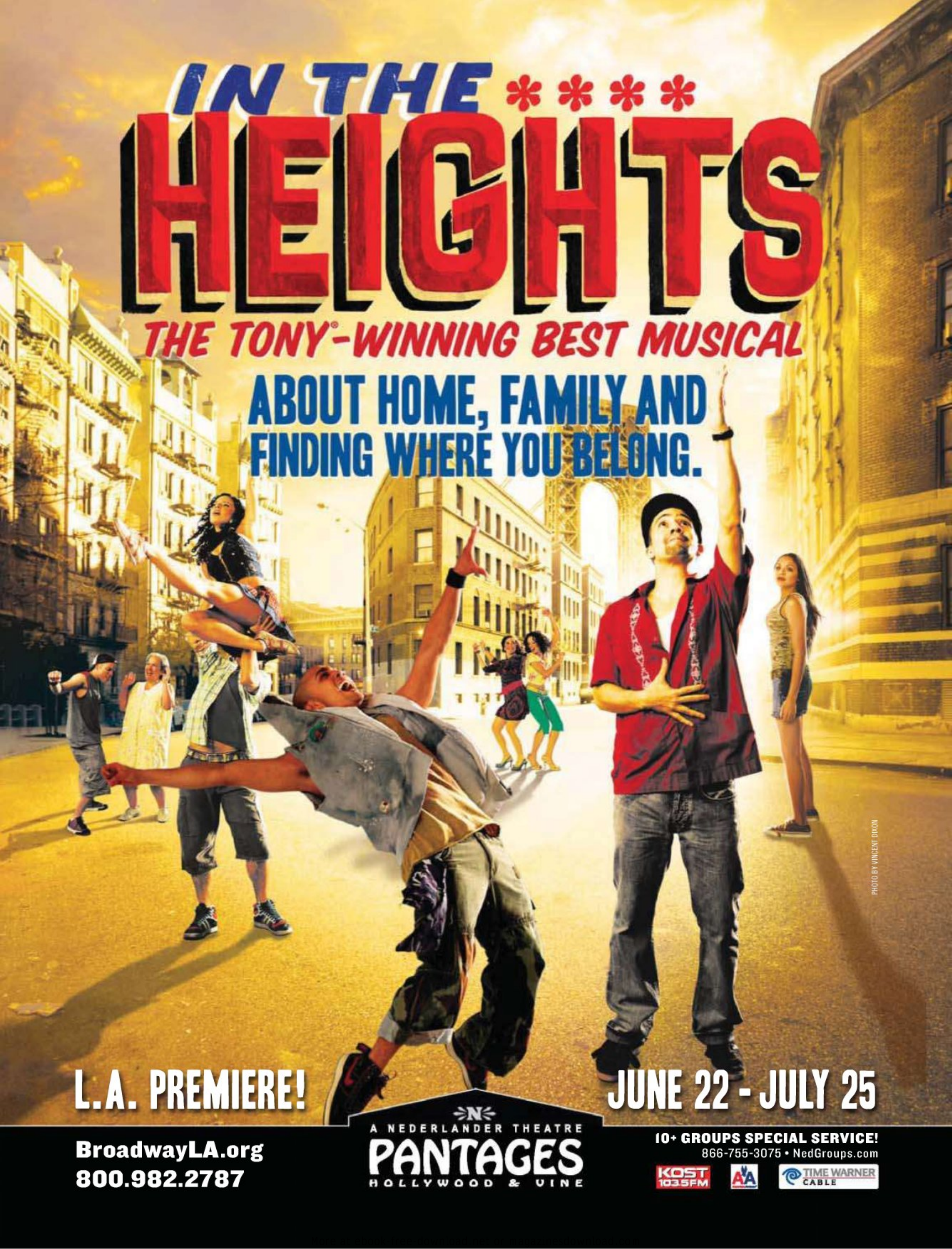
TEAM SPIRIT: Film Independent's Rebecca Yeldham (left) and Dawn Hudson at the Orpheum Theatre

The women behind Hollywood's hometown film festival are determined to make it a hot ticket

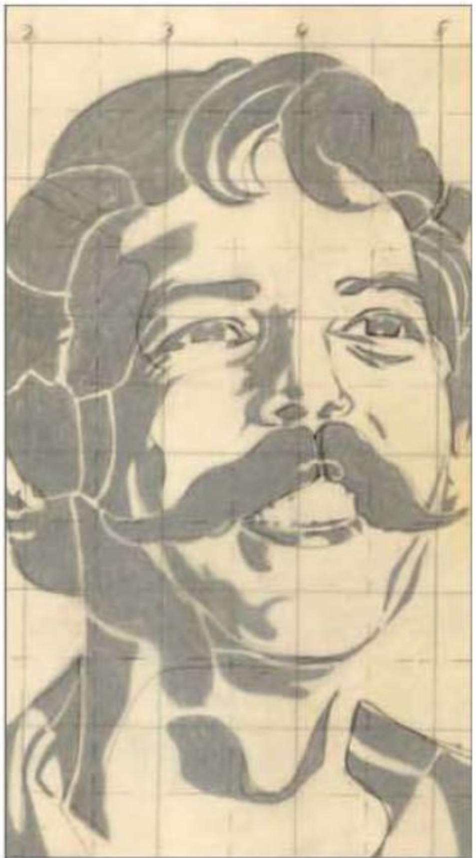
The world's great film festivals don't lack for personality. Cannes does an excellent job every spring in attracting the paparazzi and the requisite beachside cleavage while also occasionally righting some of Oscar's most egregious wrongs. Case in point: In 1976, *Taxi Driver* didn't win a gold statuette (*Rocky* nabbed Best Picture) but claimed the Palm D'Or. Audiences at the Toronto Film Festival have proved adept at foretelling unlikely box office champs, from Michael Moore's debut, *Roger & Me*, to Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*. In the January freeze of Park City, Utah, the Sundance Film Festival has made the American independent film worthy of Hollywood bidding wars. There are others that have distinguished themselves—from Sarasota to São Paulo, from Austin to Venice, the latter being the eldest of the bunch, giving out Mussolini Cups in its first eight years (it began in 1934) before switching to the Golden Lion.

The Los Angeles Film Festival, by contrast, hasn't captivated the global media or even the local news. The event, which this year takes place downtown from June 17 to 27, has grown exponentially since its inception in 1995; last year more than 83,000 attended LAFF premieres,

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tributes, and awards ceremonies. Still, its public profile remains dreadfully low. Unlike Toronto or Sundance, where executives from Lionsgate and Fox Searchlight can be seen charging in after a screening waving wads of cash to acquire distribution rights, the Los Angeles Film Festival, says its new director, Rebecca Yeldham, is "not really a market as much as it is a think tank and a community."

There is something refreshing about the fact that so little money changes hands at the LAFF. In a real way the program does what Sundance set out to do years ago: nurture young filmmakers rather than co-opt them, and encourage conversation more than auction off potentially hot properties. But the absence of "festival frenzy," as the heightened competition at many fests is called, hasn't been because LAFF organizers aren't trying. Over the years Film Independent, which sponsors the festival, has made tricky pacts with the studios and corporate sponsors. The organization's proximity to Hollywood has had a counterintuitive effect on its mission to introduce films with "original subject matter" and "uniqueness of vision" using "the economy of means." To be sure, it has shepherded the careers of a few notable indie filmmakers. But in its attempt to support those artist-driven projects, Film Independent has also slipped into bed with the conglomerates that threaten to overshadow them.

Leading the organization for the past 18 years is Dawn Hudson, a chatty Arkansas native and Harvard-educated actress who came to the group to do part-time work between auditions and hadn't the slightest idea of how to run a nonprofit. Not that her predecessors had any inkling themselves—Film Independent, which when Hudson came on board was still part of a New York-based collective called the Independent Feature Project, was all but bankrupt and hemorrhaging members when she arrived.

Hudson has created filmmaker labs and mentorship programs. She transformed the project's annual Independent Spirit Awards from a scrappy restaurant get-together into a celebrity-studded televised event in 1995. She took over the Los Angeles Film Festival in 2000, splitting from the Independent Feature Project in 2006. Meanwhile membership has surged from 900 in 1992 to more than 4,000 today.

Last year, in perhaps her most important strategic decision, Hudson brought in Yeldham as festival director. An Aussie producer with a string of critical darlings to her credit (including *The Kite Runner*, *Motorcycle Diaries*, and last year's award-winning documentary *Anvil!*), Yeldham knows how to straddle both the indie and commercial realms. Her longtime romantic partner is writer-director Curtis Hanson, and for five years she was the senior programmer at the Sundance Film Festival. She and Hudson are impassioned when they discuss film and their desire to spark a serious dialogue about the art form. If they raise the festival's profile and open up more mainstream opportunities for the winners, all the better.

The centrality of the LAFF's home city, of course, has been an obstacle to the kind of energy you get when throngs of Industry executives decamp to some isolated snowy burg or foreign beach town. "While there's great enthusiasm for film here, there's sort of an oversaturation," Yeldham says. So she envisions drawing added vitality to the festival from other L.A. creative engines not nearly as exposed. Gradually, she says, the festival will grow into more of a "cross-pollination of the arts," a demonstration of the "outpouring of creative expressions," with lots of street life and the voices of musicians, architects, novelists, and other artists. Film, it seems, will always be a key element of the festival, but far from its sole focus.

Sponsors as disparate as LG Electronic and ZonePerfect Nutrition Bars keep the Spirit Awards and the Film Festival afloat, while HBO, Target, and Sony Pictures have helped supplement Film Independent's patchwork of grants that seek to educate and to launch 80 or so indie filmmakers each year. They also help pay for Film Independent's utilitarian, high-rise headquarters on Pico Boulevard, which offers its casting rooms, editing suites, and a library equipped with a universe of filmmaking software free to its members, who pay annual dues of $95. But Film Independent can't have it both ways. Inevitably, some of its DIY credibility has gotten muddied in the process.

"They do try to do a lot of good things," says Dave Poland, an L.A.-based film blogger who has consulted for film festivals in Bermuda and Miami. "But the two big events that drive their machine are skewed in this weird not-quite-independent, not-quite-studio, not-quite-honest-about-the-real-purpose way."

* * * * *

L.A. did once have a film festival that had no such contradictions. In retrospect it seems no accident that the Los Angeles International Film Exposition, or Filmex, originated in 1971—one year into the most daring and independent-minded decade of Hollywood filmmaking we're likely to see—and that it folded in 1985, when *Back to the Future* pulled in nearly $200 million. That film was box office evidence that boilerplate heroism had returned and that what writer Peter Biskind would dub

the "Raging Bulls, Easy Riders" era of antiheroism, in his book of the same name, was emphatically over.

During its short but vibrant existence, Filmex not only screened *The Last Picture Show* and *Annie Hall* but lured Alfred Hitchcock and Luis Buñuel to premieres of their later films and ran 24-hour Billy Wilder marathons and 50 straight hours of musicals. Not that Filmex was all high-brow: It evinced a weakness for Barbra Streisand-related kitsch, staging world premieres of *Funny Lady* and the 1976 remake of *A Star Is Born*. But the festival gave an unparalleled sense of the best of what lay behind and hopefully ahead for Hollywood. Out of Filmex's ashes rose the American Cinematheque, the nonprofit revival house that hosts special screenings in the Egyptian and Aero theaters.

Blogger Dave Poland says Film Independent's annual events "are skewed in this weird not-quite-independent, not-quite-studio, not-quite-honest-about-the-real-purpose way."

Hudson and her team clearly hope to bring more artistic gravitas to the Los Angeles Film Festival this year, largely by staging it in downtown L.A., a cultural center for the young and creative that, Yeldham says, is "tied very much to the DNA of Film Independent." The program is culled from more than 4,600 unsolicited entries to give viewers a populist mix of studio fare, navel-gazing indies, and cinema from around the world. The goal is to foster an urban destination event with a rhythm that appeals to cineasts, Industry types, and even occasional filmgoers. Indeed, moving the festival hub to the splashy L.A. Live complex, with its 7,000-seat Nokia Theatre, certainly brings some much-needed verve. And screening films at REDCAT at Walt Disney Concert Hall and at the historic Orpheum and Million Dollar movie palaces on Broadway, even outdoors at the California Plaza, make hoofing around Westwood (the festival's former home) seem flat-out dull. "What we liked about downtown was this incredibly vibrant, forward-thinking, diverse arts community," says Yeldham. The move, she says, "represented an expanded footprint for the festival."

Film Independent's board and staff have talked about relinquishing the "glamour and casualness," as Hudson once put it, of a summer festival and moving it to the fall to latch onto Oscar buzz. They've also considered new ways of exhibiting films—everything from expanding the Film Independent Web site to partnering with national theater chains. But like so many others in entertainment today,

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Film Independent hasn't yet come up with a formula that can preserve artistic integrity and make some cash in the process. "We haven't pinned it down," says award-winning director and board president Bill Condon.

"There's a recalibrating for everyone," says Hudson as she gazes at the panoramic view of West L.A. from her office. "We want to help filmmakers reach their audience, but the model that will serve filmmakers hasn't really shown itself. You can put your film out in a variety of ways, and it won't matter. It won't help the artist. It might get feature distribution deals. It might get you a slot on a long list of [video-on-demand] options, but nobody ever sees the film. And you certainly never see any money for it. What is the option that's going to work?"

In terms of possibilities and tidy Industry synergies, Hudson need look no further than her organization's Independent Spirit Awards, which has turned into a sort of televised rehearsal dinner for the Oscars, packed with movie stars, studio muscle, and corporate funding. Even the show's presenters were stuck trying to distinguish the event from the Oscars, typically held the following night. "The Academy Awards honors the biggest directors and superstar actors," Sarah Silverman told the audience in 2006, "while this show is the champion of struggling artists like Ang Lee and George Clooney." When Ben Stiller spoke at this year's awards, he joked that "it says volumes about the organizers of this event that even though I've been in over 350 big-budget studio movies during the last five years, the Spirit Awards were bold enough to say 'You, Ben Stiller, epitomize our core values.'"

The Independent Spirit Awards' outsider bona fides were assured as long as John Waters was host. The writer-director with the pencil-thin mustache, who put obese men in drag, pioneered the scratch-and-sniff "Odorama," and made unflinching cult classics like *Pink Flamingos* and *Polyester*, was the antithesis of the Billy Crystal insider glad-hander. Waters's hosting of the show was as unexpectedly appealing as his movies. Sponsorship dollars poured in, and the dinner party on the beach became a hotter ticket than the Oscars.

Alas, Waters did his farewell telecast six years ago. Since then movie stars (Samuel L. Jackson) and comic actors (Silverman, Rainn Wilson, Eddie Izzard) have taken his place. But the acerbic filmmaker has no hard feelings. He managed to get a few reliable paydays out of the gig, and as a cash-strapped auteur, he's only too grateful for that opportunity. "Independent filmmakers will take the money wherever they can get it," Waters says. "Believe me. From drug dealers. From studios. From the Mafia. We'll take it anywhere we can get it." ■



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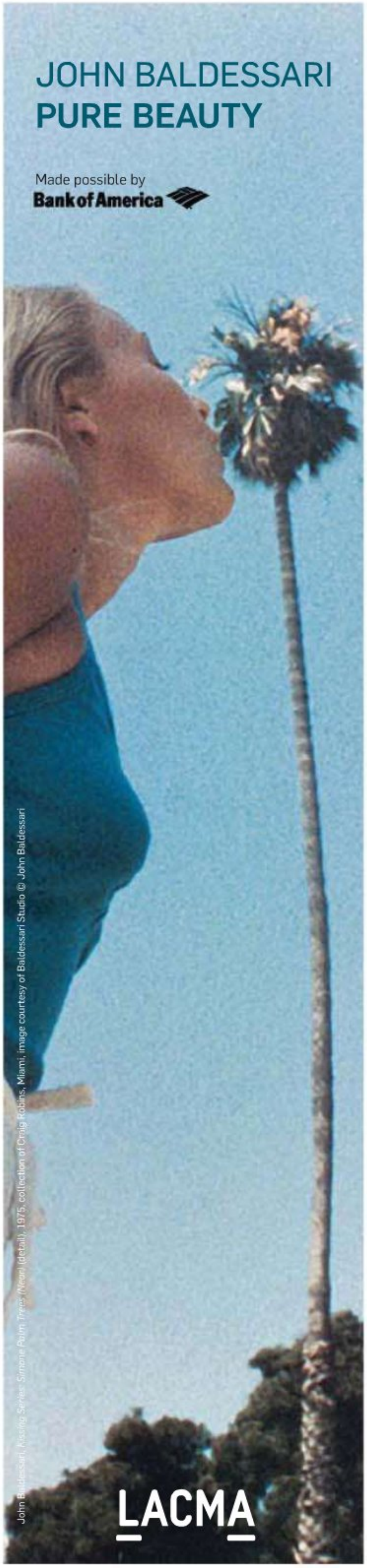
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views and communities. Museums can be the connectors and bridge builders, helping visitors of all ages, backgrounds, nationalities, and locations better understand one another.

"Connected" does not have to come at the expense of "local." What are the most pressing on-the-ground issues for museums right now, and what tools can museums provide to meet the needs? Economic issues, of course, are urgent. Can local collaborations be a way to survive the recession?

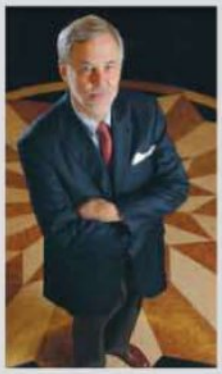
There is no better city than L.A. to explore these critical issues. That's why the world's largest annual gathering of museum professionals converged at the L.A. Convention Center May 23 to 26.

Yet the spirited dialogue between museums and the public is ongoing. Join the conversation today. Visit your local museums to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and traditions in Los Angeles. It is one of the compelling reasons why Angelenos of all ages and origins are proud to call the "City of Angels" home.



AMERICA'S MUSEUMS TODAY

A Q&A WITH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS PRESIDENT FORD W. BELL



Ford W. Bell became president of the American Association of Museums (AAM) in June 2007. Under his stewardship, the 104-year-old organization has sought to expand its influence through advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill, worked to grow and enhance its services to the museum field and to the public, and worked to communicate the value museums bring to communities across America on a daily basis. AAM boasts some 20,000 members—3,000 institutions, 17,000 individuals, and 300 industry partners. It is the largest service organization in the museum field, encompassing every size and type of museum. As AAM finalized preparations for its Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in Los Angeles, Bell discussed the museum world in Los Angeles and across the country.

Q WHY DID THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS DECIDE TO COME TO LOS ANGELES FOR ITS 2010 GATHERING?

A There are a number of reasons, both practical and, shall we say, inspirational. I'll address the latter first.

At the risk of stating the obvious, Los Angeles is one of the world's great cities. To be virtually anywhere in L.A. is to be affected by the almost palpable buzz of creativity that makes the city hum. We expected some 5,000 museum professionals from around the world to come to L.A., representing every type of museum, every discipline of the museum field, as well as more than 40 countries. All of our attendees are likely to have drawn inspiration just from being in Los Angeles.

More directly linked to our field is the vibrant, extraordinarily deep, and varied museum community here in Los Angeles. Few cities on the planet can boast the kind of rich museum environment you have here. That is important when we choose the locations for our annual meetings, because the diversity of the museum field is such that we can always learn from each other. Throughout the four days of the AAM gathering, L.A.'s museums hosted a number of events and workshops for their colleagues from around the world, spreading the L.A. model for museum success globally.

And museums today operate in an increasingly diverse, increasingly globalized, increasingly interconnected world. AAM and its Center for the Future of Museums believe that these changes offer both challenges and opportunities for the museum field. From a practical point of view, museums must be able to engage and reach our diverse

populations in order to remain both sustainable and vital parts of the social fabric. L.A. is a laboratory for that. I've read that the inhabitants of the Los Angeles basin speak more than 100 languages and represent nearly 149 countries. Those are amazing statistics. More amazing is that it seems to work here. So we felt that we could all learn from Los Angeles, and that is what museums are all about in the end—learning.

Q THIS WAS THE 104TH AAM ANNUAL MEETING & MUSEUMEXPO. WHAT HAS MADE IT SO ENDURING?

A I think its status as the largest gathering of museum professionals in the world is in part attributable to the unique role of the American Association of Museums. We are the museum service organization that encompasses all types of museums—art, history, historic sites, natural history, children's, science and technology centers, zoos, aquariums, public and botanic gardens. You name a type of museum, and it is included among our membership.

For that reason, AAM must bring to bear expertise that can explore the common issues all museums face, whether it be care of collections, integrating new technologies, exhibit design, membership issues, whatever. Our attendees had more than 160 substantive sessions to choose from, and they were topics and ideas that professionals can apply to their own museum, in their own community.

Q HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE MUSEUM WORLD IN 2010?

A I think perhaps a recent study we did at AAM tells the tale best. In a January survey of museums of every type and size, in every region of the country, we found that two-thirds of U.S. museums had experienced some financial stress in this economy, and that 20 percent of those reported that

stress as being severe or very severe. What this really means is that museums are no different from other nonprofits in this Great Recession, and likewise no different from the majority of American households.

On the other hand, the survey found that American museums are serving more of the public than ever. Three in five museums reported an increase in attendance in these tough times. This is keeping with what we have seen in past recessions, and in difficult times in general. For instance, there was a dramatic spike in museum attendance after 9/11.

So museums are popular. Very popular. Our research estimates the number of annual museum visits in this country at 850 million—that's more than all professional sporting events and theme parks combined.

Why are museums so popular, particularly in this recession? Well, museums are a bargain. AAM research shows that the median price of admission at U.S. museums is $7. Compare that to taking the family to the ballpark, or even a movie. What's more, 35 percent of the museums in this country are free. I'm no economist, but you cannot get much cheaper than free.

Museums are an ideal entertainment alternative for families. They are enlightening, affordable, safe, and engaging.

Q YOU OFTEN EQUATE MUSEUMS WITH VALUE. IS THIS STRICTLY IN FINANCIAL TERMS, OR DOES IT MEAN MORE?

A At AAM, we think that museums are as essential to their communities as schools, libraries, and utilities. After all, museums provide very similar services, and museums are all about public service.

The value proposition for museums encompasses a number of issues today. Museums are vital elements in our educational infrastructure, and while the traditional school field trip is important, this goes well beyond field trips. And speaking of field trips, despite almost being put on the endangered species list by No Child Left Behind, field trips still brought some 55 million schoolchildren into museums in 2008.

But museums are also sanctuaries of lifelong learning. Whether it be science centers, history museums or sites, art museums, children's museums, zoos, aquariums, or gardens, virtually each of the estimated 17,500 museums in the U.S. offers a range of educational programs to their communities. These range from lectures to film festivals to initiatives aimed at every age, from toddlers to seniors. Museums provide the informal or experiential learning environment that helps people learn, regardless of age or socioeconomic status.

On top of that, museums are increasingly providing public services that local governments can no longer afford, whether it be family services, language instruction, or even programs for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. Museums are economic engines—the U.S. Council of Mayors included a number of museum projects in their requests for the stimulus package—and sources of civic pride. I'm sure many Angelenos are proud of living in one of the greatest museum cities on the planet.

Q YOU'VE MENTIONED AFFORDABILITY AND OVERALL VALUE, BUT IS THERE SOMETHING DISTINCTIVE THAT SETS MUSEUMS APART FROM OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS?

A I believe there are a number of things that make museums distinctive. But there are two that are perhaps more important.

The first is trust. Americans trust their museums. A 2008 study by the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services found museums and libraries to be the most trusted sources of information by Americans, far eclipsing all others. That trust has been built, layer by layer, since the first museum opened on this continent, in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1773. And for museums, with their devoted adherence to the highest ethical standards and their commitment to transparency, trust is the coin of the realm.

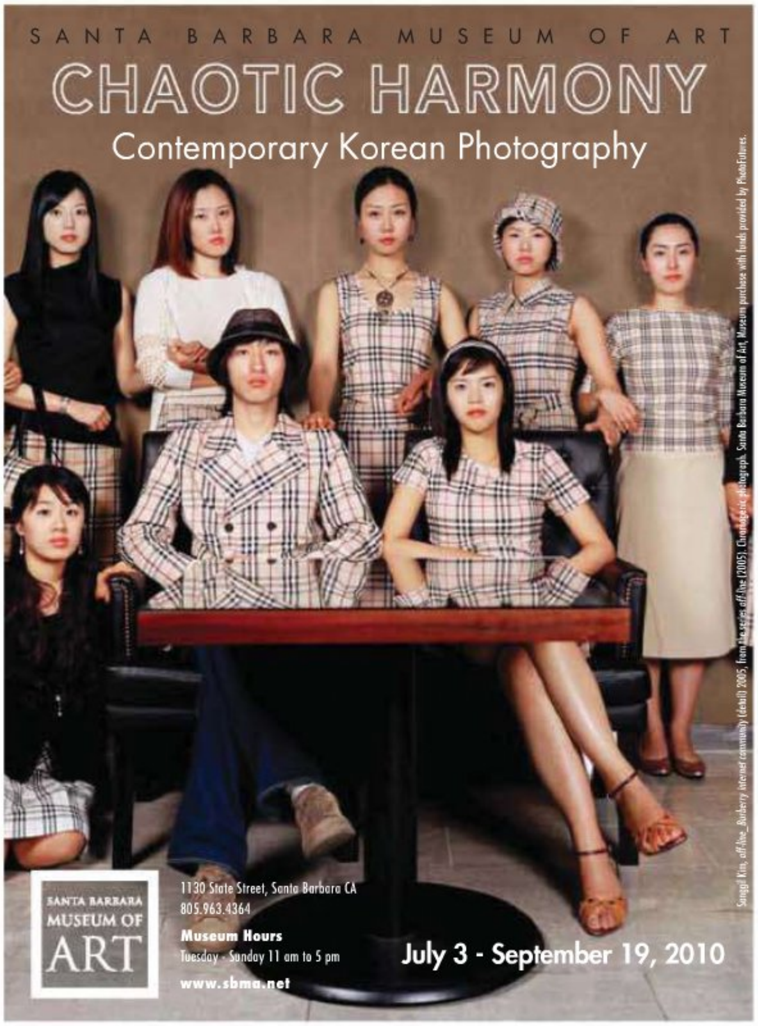
Museums are the collectors, conservators, interpreters, and exhibitors of our cultural heritages—historic, artistic, natural, and scientific. Therefore museums serve as touchstones, telling us where we've been, where we are, and, increasingly, where we might be headed. And in a world in which all of us are moving at a faster and faster pace, museums offer what noted museum researcher James Chung calls 'respite and retreat.'

But I think it is even something more than that. Museums offer one thing that is getting more and more difficult to find in today's world: authenticity. Our world is a virtual one these days, filled with 'reality' TV, a celebrity-driven media, video games, and on and on. Although it may sound trite, there's nothing like the real thing. And real things are found in museums.

For instance, here in Los Angeles you can see art worked by the hands of sculptors from ancient Greece at the Getty. You can see amazing fossils at the Museum of Natural History. You can see the glories of our living planet at the Los Angeles Zoo or experience the wonders of science at the California Science Center. The world's great art is here, from LACMA and the Hammer and other institutions that are among the world's finest, and on and on. You can visit a museum to virtually every culture and ethnic heritage. The possibilities for Angelenos are literally endless.

To see the real thing, whatever the object or artifact, is to stand before something that transcends time. The spirit of the original and the person who created it are palpable.

We Americans are adrift in an ocean of the superficial. In the midst of this, museums stand like islands of the authentic, rare sanctuaries of substance. Despite the influences pulling our citizens—particularly our younger ones—toward the ephemeral, they are nonetheless engaged and enchanted by what is real. In terms of creating memories, in terms of appreciating great artistry and craftsmanship, in terms of living and breathing our country's great history, no online reproduction can rival being there. And museums are where 'there' is.





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GEORGE SEGAL: *THE EXPULSION*
May 12–September 5
Experience acclaimed artist George Segal's life-sized sculptural work depicting Adam and Eve exiting the Garden of Eden, alongside photographs of the artist by Donald Lokuta.



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IN MUSEUMS WE TRUST:

FAST FACTS ABOUT AMERICA'S MUSEUMS

1 American museums receive more than 850 million visits a year. That's more than all major league sporting events and amusement parks combined.

2 There are more museums in the United States (at least 17,500) than McDonald's restaurants or Starbucks cafés.

3 The median cost of an adult museum admission is just $7—cheaper than a movie ticket—while 35 percent of U.S. museums are free and 73 percent of the rest offer free days.

4 Every week, Americans donate 1 million hours of their time to museums, with a total annual value of more than $1 billion.

5 Museums hosted more than 55 million students on field trips during the 2007-08 school year.

6 The nation's museums spend more than $2 billion a year on education programming and support.

7 American museums preserve and protect more than 1 billion objects.

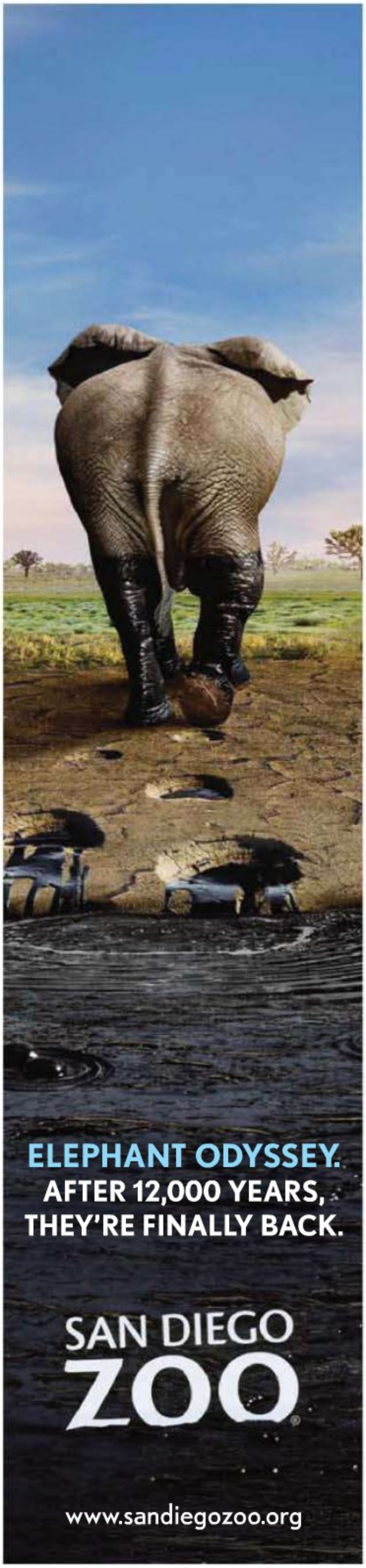
8 Museums employ nearly half a million Americans.

9 In 1989, museums received an average of 39 percent of their funding from government sources; today, just 24 percent comes from governments.

10 In 2008, museums made a direct contribution to the U.S. economy of more than $20 billion (just counting expenses, salaries, purchases, etc.) —and an indirect contribution of billions more.

11 America's nonprofit arts and culture sector generates $166 billion in economic activity every year, with a return on investment of more than $7 in taxes for every $1 in government appropriations.

12 Americans trust museums: 87 percent of Americans describe museums as trustworthy and a majority say museums are the most trustworthy source of information about the past.



MUSEUM GUIDE

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web.mac.com/calmuseum/Site/Home.html

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www.kidspacemuseum.org

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MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN MUSEUMS

1773 — The first museum on the continent opens in Charleston, South Carolina.

1786 — Charles Wilson Peale opens his famed "cabinet of curiosities" in Philadelphia.

1846 — The Smithsonian Institution is founded in Washington, D.C.

1868 — The first African-American-themed museum opens at Hampton University in Virginia.

1869-70 — Major institutions open, including New York's American Museum of Natural History, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

1880s — School field trips have their genesis, inspired by Henry Watson Kent, curator of the Norwich Museum in Connecticut.

1899 — The Brooklyn Children's Museum, the first of its kind, opens in New York City.

1906 — The American Association of Museums (AAM) is founded in New York City.

1907-08 — Museums play a major role in educating the public about a tuberculosis epidemic in the U.S.

1915 — The Cleveland Museum of Art creates the first full-time education department in a museum.

1920s — A museum boom inspires a new building project every 11.4 days.

1930s — FDR creates the Works Progress Administration, declaring that "museums could be woven into the very warp and woof of democracy."

1941 — AAM's Museum News asks "Can America Be Bombed?" just weeks before Pearl Harbor.

1950s — The launch of Sputnik inspires a boom in science centers.

1961 — The California Science Center in Los Angeles opens "Mathematica," the first interactive exhibit.

1976 — Congress creates the federal Institute for Museum Services, the precursor to today's Institute for Museum and Library Services.

2001 — In the wake of the September 11 attacks, millions flock to museums, including 8,200 visitors to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art on September 12.

Source: *Riches, Rivals & Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*, by Marjorie Schwarzer (The AAM Press, 2006)

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FREE ART AND CULTURE, EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.

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Armory Center for the Arts		Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Autry National Center		Second of month					
Bowers Museum							First of Month
California African American Museum		Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
California Science Center	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Craft and Folk Art Museum			First of Month				
FIDM Museum			Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Fowler Museum at UCLA			Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Getty Center		Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Getty Villa*	Free all day		Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Hammer Museum				Free all day			
The Huntington*				First of Month			
Japanese American National Museum				Third of month all day, 5-8 p.m. all others			
Kidspace Children's Museum		First of month 4-8 p.m.					
Laguna Art Museum				First of Month 5-9 p.m.			
LACMA	Free 5-8 p.m.	Second of month all day, 5-8 p.m. all others		Free 5-8 p.m.	Free 5-9 p.m.	Free 5-8 p.m.	Free 5-8 p.m.
MOCA Grand Avenue				Free 5-8 p.m.			
Museum of Latin American Art							Free all day
Natural History Museum		First of Month					
Norton Simon Museum					First of month 6-9 p.m.		
Orange County Museum of Art							Second of month
The Paley Center for Media			Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day
Santa Monica Museum of Art		Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	
Skirball Cultural Center				Free all day			
Studio for Southern California History			Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	Free all day	

LEGEND

- Free all day
- First of Month
- First of month 4-8 p.m.
- First of Month 5-9 p.m.
- First of month 6-9 p.m.
- Second of month
- Second of month all day, 5-8 p.m. all others
- Third of month all day, 5-8 p.m. all others
- Free 5-8 p.m.
- Free 5-9 p.m.

*Reservations/tickets required.

Some institutions have recommended donations and/or parking fees. Ticketed exhibitions do not apply. Check museum websites for additional special free days and hours.

Calendar brought to you by the Museum Marketing Roundtable, www.museumsla.org

Los Angeles MAGAZINE



From the Mountains to the Sea

Itineraries Inspired by the Ancient Hawaiians



O'ahu's mountains, valleys, and seas have sustained native Hawaiians and shaped their daily life for thousands of years. As you experience the island's natural splendors, you'll also learn about the vibrant Hawaiian culture and history.

Copy provided by the O'ahu Visitors Bureau

Long ago, native Hawaiians lived and worked on ahupua'a, wedge-shaped land divisions that extended from the mountains to the sea and followed the natural watershed. The ahupua'a featured all the resources the community needed to survive, from fertile lands for growing crops to wood for building canoes and the sea for fresh fish. Hawaiians shared their resources and practiced stewardship of the land and sea in order to lead a sustainable lifestyle within the ahupua'a system.

Come explore O'ahu, the Heart of Hawai'i, and discover upland, midland, and ocean itineraries inspired by the ancient ahupua'a. Learn how Hawaiians are restoring and preserving their natural environment and celebrating their rich cultural heritage. Exhilarating outdoor adventures, cultural outings, and environmental voluntourism opportunities await. From the mountains to the sea, you'll understand how ancient ways live today and see O'ahu and Hawai'i in a totally new light.



HAUULA TRAIL VIEW

Uplands

A Bird's-eye View and Scenic Hikes

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PHOTO CREDIT: O'AHU VISITORS BUREAU


BISHOP MUSEUM HAWAIIAN HALL EXTERIOR

Once you've seen the island from on high, it's time to explore the terrain. **Sierra Club Hawai'i** (sierraclubhawaii.com) offers regularly scheduled hikes with varying degrees of difficulty (easy, moderate, and strenuous) along with service projects across the island. The organization's mission—to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet—guides every itinerary. Though hikes are available year round, summertime hikes often feature waterfalls and pools great for cooling off. On June 20, the group will lead a Waimano Pool Hike up a ridge to a waterfall and pool on Waimano Stream. On June 27, the featured hike heads up Kawai Nui Stream on the North Shore for a dip in a refreshing pool.

Midlands

Museum Treasures, Wetlands, and Valleys

Learn about ancient Hawaiians at **Bishop Museum** (bishopmuseum.org), the world's leading institution devoted to Hawaiian and Pacific island cultures, history, and natural history. The magnificently restored Hawaiian Hall, which reopened in August 2009, provides access to the museum's incomparable collections while showcasing the values, beliefs, daily life, and cultural practices of native Hawaiians through Hawaiian eyes.

The second floor of Hawaiian Hall, Wao Kanaka, the realm of man, spotlights the importance of land and nature in native Hawaiians' daily lives. A mural showcases historic photos of people and families. Media stations provide short video clips of cultural practices. Other cases use artifacts and images to illustrate such themes as social structure, family, fishing canoes, and agriculture. One case is devoted to ahupua'a and the Ahupua'a of Kapalama. Interpretive text containing quotes from native Hawaiians of the 19th and 20th centuries provides additional insight.

Once you have experienced Bishop Museum's marvelous historical and cultural overview, it's time to head out for more adventure. Travel to the North Shore and explore **Waimea Valley** (waimeavalley.net), one of O'ahu's last partially intact ahupua'a. Waimea Valley is significant in Hawai'i's history and is a repository of Hawaiian spirituality and traditions—a place to experience the island's scenic marvels, wildlife, and plant life, and also a place to learn about the lifestyle and customs of ancient Hawaiians. →

PHOTO CREDIT: BISHOP MUSEUM

'Ohana Outings

Make memories with overnight family nature adventures.

Honolulu Zoo (honoluluzoo.org)

Snooze in the Zoo is your chance to stay overnight and participate in an evening of family-oriented adventure. The night begins with a buffet dinner, continues with guided walking tours of the zoo after dark, and concludes with s'mores around a campfire. Participants may pitch their tents on one of the zoo's lawns or sleep out under the stars. Campouts begin at 5:30 p.m. and end the following morning at 9 a.m. The program takes place once a month on a Friday or Saturday, March through October.

Sea Life Park (sealifeparkhawaii.com)

Kids ages 6 through 12 and their families can Doze with the Dolphins at Sea Life Park. You'll learn all about dolphins and take a flashlight tour and treasure hunt. Guests can sleep next to the dolphins at Hawaii Ocean Theater, slumber near sharks in the reef tank, or camp in a tent at Makapu'u meadows.

Eco Tours

Experience the wonders of O'ahu's land and sea with eco adventure outfitters.

O'ahu Nature Tours (oahunaturetours.com)

Practicing conservation through education, O'ahu Nature Tours offers a comprehensive menu of small-group-size guided tours that explore the island's diverse terrain and native bird and plant species. Choose from waterfall hikes, a Diamond Head Crater adventure, rain forest treks, custom bird-watching experiences, and more. O'ahu Nature Tours donates a portion of proceeds to local conservation efforts.

Wild Side Specialty Tours (www.sailhawaii.com)

Enjoy year-round whale watching, snorkel among wild dolphins, and swim with sea turtles and tropical reef fish accompanied by a marine wildlife biologist crew on intimate outings aboard environmentally friendly vessels. You'll experience the beauty of O'ahu's waters and close encounters with marine wildlife while learning about Hawai'i's fragile marine environment. A portion of proceeds are donated to the Wild Dolphin Foundation.



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O'ahu Hotel Offers

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Hilton Hawaiian Village makes it easy for kids to discover their own paradise with the Camp Penguin Package. By booking ocean view or better accommodations, families receive free admission for one child for the new Camp Penguin program (a $90 value), 50% off lagoon watercraft at Waikiki Beach Activities, $10 off Atlantis Submarines (discount good for up to four people), 20% off Mandara Spa, and no charge on connecting rooms (based on availability). Rates on the Camp Penguin Package begin at $229 per night, and the package is valid through December 26. To book, call (808) 949-4321 or (800) HILTONS [(800) 445-8667] and ask for rate code "OY."

Starwood Hotels & Resorts is offering enticing resort credits with every five-consecutive-night stay at its signature Oahu resorts: a $1,000 resort credit at the Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort; or a $500 resort credit at Sheraton Waikiki, Sheraton Princess Kaiulani, or the Moana Surfrider, a Westin Resort & Spa. If you stay 10 nights, your resort credit doubles. Resort credits may be used toward dining, spa, activities, room upgrades, and more. Book online at www.starwoodhotelshawaii.com/resortcredit or call toll free (866) 716-8140 and request promo code HRC for travel now through January 7.



HAWAI'I NATURE CENTER

Midlands (cont.)

Saturday morning hikes (arranged by ability) offer stunning valley views and the chance to explore a variety of plant life and archeological sites while your guide discusses ecosystem restoration, invasive species, Hawaiian culture, and the valley's history. You can also opt for walks devoted to history and native Hawaiian plants. Experts demonstrate lau niu (coconut frond weaving), kapa making and dyeing (traditional bark cloth production), and kalaipo¯haku (stone carving). Hula lessons, Hawaiian music performances, and ancient Hawaiian games are offered along with music, storytelling, and crafts with Waimea's ku¯puna (elders/a source of knowledge).

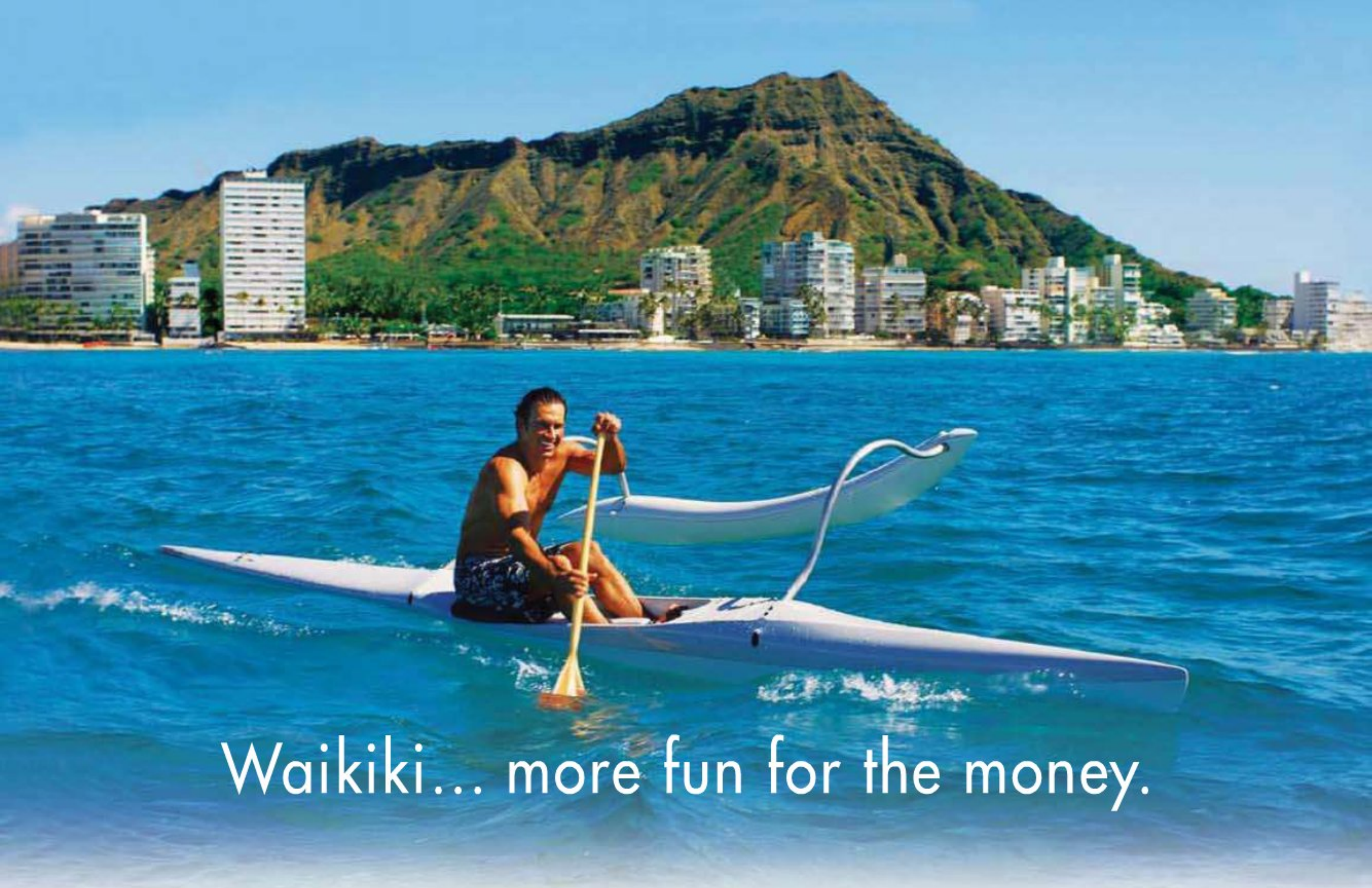
More outdoor wonders are on tap with **Hawai'i Nature Center** (hawaiinaturecenter.org), which provides hands-on environmental education programs and experiences for families and children. Join the guided Ka'ena Point Natural Reserve Area Hike on June 26, a beautiful coastal hike and an occasion to learn about native plants, sea birds, and Hawaiian history. Something Fishy on July 11 is a fun-filled day of fishing, exploring, and learning how to care for Makiki Stream.

If your family will be visiting the island for at least five days, consider Hawai'i Nature Center's SNAP (Sensational Nature Adventure Program), five-day summer day camp programs. Professional environmental educators will lead your child in forest hikes, stream investigations, nature crafts, insect safaris, beach explorations, and off-site field trips. Weekly camp sessions run early June to mid-August.



Lyon Arboretum (hawaii.edu/lyonarboretum) at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is situated at the back of Mānoa Valley in a key portion of the Waikīkī ahupua'a. It's the only university botanical garden in the United States that's located in a tropical rain forest. Visitors can wander through the arboretum experiencing the verdant rain forest, the vast valley amphitheater, the mist of the waterfall, and the blazing colors of exotic plants. Guided tours impart fascinating information about important cultural plants and practices, native plant conservation, and island biogeography and biodiversity. Gorgeous blooming plants ('ohi'a lehua, native gardenia, and hibiscus) and fruits (mountain apples, bananas, and cacao) are tour highlights. →

PHOTO CREDIT: HAWAI'I NATURE CENTER



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Waikiki Beach Hotel

Voluntourism Opportunities

Gain a greater appreciation of O'ahu's natural and cultural resources through volunteer activities.

AccesSurf (www.accessurf.org)
AccesSurf provides people with disabilities adaptive surfing instruction and therapeutic educational programs on water recreation and makes Hawaiian beaches more accessible. Volunteers provide general assistance and serve as beach buddies, kayak paddlers, and surf escorts.

Hawai'i Nature Center (hawaiinaturecenter.org)
Hawai'i Nature Center offers volunteers the chance to participate in the Pouhala Marsh Wetland Restoration. Pouhala Marsh comprises a remnant fish pond and coastal marsh and is the largest remaining wetland habitat in Pearl Harbor. Volunteers help restore the Pouhala Marsh by removing invasive species and establishing habitat areas for the endangered Hawaiian stilts. June 19 is the next service day for volunteers.

He'eia Fishpond (www.paepaeoheeia.org)
Paepae o He'eia is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for He'eia Fishpond—an ancient Hawaiian fish pond located in He'eia, Ko'olaupoko. Tour the pond, participate in service-learning projects aimed at sharing the ways that Hawaiian ancestors cared for this special place, and learn of the storied landscape surrounding the fish pond in mo'olelo (stories) about the He'eia ahupua'a and Ko'olaupoko.

Ma'o Organic Farms (maoorganicfarms.org)
O'ahu's largest organic farm grows exquisite fruits and vegetables sought after by the island's markets and restaurants. You can visit the farm on GIVE Days (Get Involved Volunteer Environmentally), which run the last Saturday of the month. Visitors help plant new fields, weed, and harvest.

Sierra Club Hawai'i, (sierraclubhawaii.com)
Join Sierra Club on June 12 for an O'ahu Invasive Species Committee Service Project to remove invasive Himalayan Blackberry from Pālolo. To access the work site, volunteers must hike over a mile on Mau'umae trail—an exposed, steep ridgeline. This hike is rated as very strenuous by Sierra Club Hawai'i.

University of Hawai'i Sea Grant/ReefWatch Waikīkī (Waikikireef.org, facebook.com/reefwatch)
ReefWatch Waikīkī, a project of the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, is a community-based education and coastal monitoring program that trains volunteers to gather data on the use and condition of near-shore resources and to share their knowledge of Waikiki's natural history. Volunteer opportunities include water-quality monitoring and testing and beach cleanups.

Waikalua Loko Fishpond (WaikaluaLokoFishpond.org)
Located in Kāne'ohe Bay, Waikalua Loko Fishpond welcomes volunteers to help clean up, restore, maintain, and preserve the fish pond so that it may continue to be a living resource for teaching ancient Hawaiian culture and history. Remaining days this year are June 12, September 18, and November 20.



PHOTO CREDIT: O'AHU VISITORS BUREAU

Midlands (cont.)

The arboretum's educational programming connects people with the cultural heritage and natural history of the site. There are children's classes in which kids can pound poi (Hawaiian culinary tradition for preparing taro), gather ulu (breadfruit), harvest u'ala (sweet potatoes), and make kapa cloth and lei. Adults can take classes in lei making, lauhala crafts, nature photography, and Hawaiian cooking.

You can see how Hawaiians today are restoring their natural environment at Kawai Nui Marsh, the state's largest wetland, located in Kailua. **Ahahui Mālama i ka Lōhaki** (ahahui.net)—a nonprofit coalition created to preserve Hawaii's native species and cultural heritage—is working to restore the marsh. The group's educational tours of Kailua Ahupua'a and Kawai Nui Marsh reveal information about the geological, archaeological, historic and ecological resources of the marsh. You can also volunteer to help restore Kawai Nui Marsh and the adjacent historic Ulupō Heiau, an ancient temple site. Tours are offered the first Saturday of the month and community service projects are planned for the second and third Saturdays of every month.

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SEA LIFE PARK

By the Sea

Wildlife Refuges and a World-class Aquarium

Protecting Hawai'i's coastline and endangered wildlife is an ongoing effort. **James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge** (fws.gov/jamescampbell) in Kahuku on the North Shore was created to provide a habitat for four of Hawaii's endangered waterbirds: ae'o (Hawaiian stilt), 'alae ke'oke'o (Hawaiian coot), 'alae 'ula (Hawaiian moorhen), and koloa maoli (Hawaiian duck). The Ki'i Unit of the Refuge is open to the public for limited times during the nonbreeding season. Visitors are welcome from the third Saturday in October through the third Saturday in February. Guided public tours are offered during this time on Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings of the first two Saturdays of the month, and in the afternoon on the last two Saturdays of the month.

Experience the magic and diversity of Pacific marine life and the importance of sea conservation efforts at **Waikīkī Aquarium** (waquarium.org), the third-oldest public aquarium in the United States. Situated next to a living reef on the Waikīkī shoreline, the Aquarium features interactive exhibits on the diversity of aquatic, shoreline, and coral reef habitats and marine communities of Hawai'i and the tropical Pacific. Come see the wonders of the 1,000-gallon moon jelly tank and the 35,000-gallon tank that's home to sharks and other marine life. And experience face-to-face contact with Hawaiian monk seals and colorful native fish.


WAIKIKI AQUARIUM

This summer, attend Ke Kani O Ke Kai, Waikīkī Aquarium's oceanside concert series (June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29, and August 12), featuring top island musical talent. After a day on the beach, spend an evening at the aquarium during Summer Nights with Sealife (June 8, July 13, and August 10), each date focusing on a different educational theme.

Resource Directory

Aston Hotels & Resorts
2155 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 500
Honolulu, Hawaii
(866) 774-2924
www.astonhotels.com

Hawaiian Airlines
www.hawaiianairlines.com

Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa
2005 Kalia Road
Honolulu, Hawaii
(808) 949-4321
www.hiltonhawaiianvillage.com

Ka'anapali Beach Hotel
2525 Ka'anapali Parkway
Lahaina, Hawaii
(800) 262-8450
www.kbhmaui.com

Maui Kai Kaanapali
106 Kaanapali Shores Place
Lahaina, Maui
(800) 367-5635
www.mauikai.com

O'ahu Visitors Bureau
733 Bishop Street, Suite 1520
Honolulu, Hawaii
(866) 525-6248
www.visit-oahu.com

Prince Resorts Hawaii
100 Holomoana Street
Honolulu, Hawaii
(866) PRINCE6
www.princeresortshawaii.com

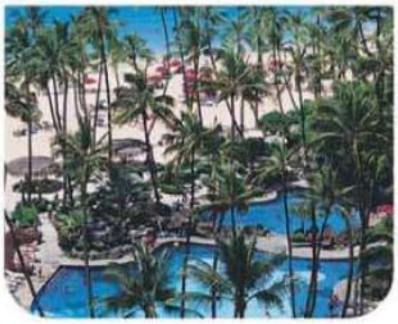
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Waikiki
2155 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 300
Honolulu, Hawaii
(866) 716-8140
www.starwoodhotelshawaii.com

Waikoloa Beach Marriot Resort & Spa
69-275 Waikoloa Beach Drive
Waikoloa, Hawaii
(800) 922-5533
www.waikoloamarriott.com

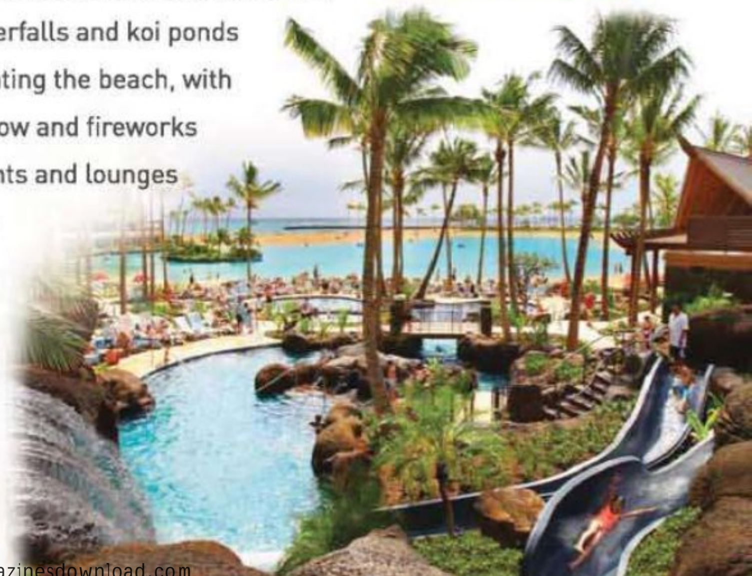
Waikiki Parc Hotel
2233 Helumoa Road
Honolulu, Hawaii
(808) 921-7272 | (800) 422-0450
www.waikikiparc.com

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THE PATIO AT
PANE E VINO



A DELICIOUS GUIDE TO

Lunch in LA

IT'S WHY YOU BUY MAYONNAISE. IT'S THE REASON THERE ARE CRUMBS IN your keyboard and french fries under your car seat. It's where bacon, lettuce, and tomato meet. It's a break we all deserve but too seldom take to our full satisfaction. It's lunch, the middle child in a three-meal-a-day family that gets dominated by breakfast—"the most important," they say—and dinner, which is, let's face it, a bit of a prima donna. When was the last time you found refuge in a bowl of Cheerios or soaked up a few minutes of weekday sun with a plate of beef Wellington on your lap? » With our absurdly beautiful weather and tendency toward loosey-goosey work schedules (perpetual irritants to our East Coast counterparts), Angelenos are particularly well suited to the midday meal. A perfect L.A. lunch can be three hours spent beneath a blooming wisteria, plucking arugula from a salmon salad and sipping a frosty glass of Viognier, or ten minutes on a curb next to a gourmet Caribbean-fusion food truck. » Los Angeles is home to some of the world's finest achievements in meat slicing, salad chopping, and tortilla wrapping, not to mention the loveliest settings in which to enjoy them. Yet too many of us spend the lunch hour by insulting it, nibbling defrosted pasta-like products at our desks or assemblages of prepackaged cold cuts on the 405. The following pages are meant to inspire you to make lunch a time to dine—not scarf—or, at the very least, make whatever it is you're having delivered to your cubicle as wonderful as it can possibly be. C'mon, let's *do* lunch.

EDITED BY LESLEY BARGAR SUTER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE LAURIDSEN ✻ ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

[10] FOOD TRUCK FINDS

BY PATRIC KUH



BANH MI
PHAMISH
A soft baguette with lemongrass-scented pork, pickled carrots, jalapeños, and cilantro.



BREAKFAST BISCUIT
BUTTERMILK
A soda biscuit with egg and smoky *tocino* (bacon) that packs the pleasure of home cooking.



RAJAS FRIES
FRYSMITH
Strips of charred *poblano* chiles, browned onions, and grilled beef over crunchy fries.



AMERICAN CHEESE SANDWICH
THE GRILLED CHEESE TRUCK
Squares of American cheese—cozier than Brie—melted into crisp, buttery bread.



SALMON SKIN HAND ROLL
FISHLIPS
A nori cone bulging with crackly salmon skin, *ponzu*-sprinkled rice, and scallions.

HAND ROLL: SHAWNA AMINI




FROM LEFT: COOLHAUS; DOGTOWN DOGS

THE YEAR OUR FOOD WENT MOBILE

THE FOOD TRUCK FAD HAS REVOLUTIONIZED HOW WE ENGAGE WITH OUR CUISINE AND OUR CITY, BUT DOES IT LIVE UP TO THE HYPE?

BY PATRIC KUH

BOOL BBQ'S TRUCK HAS SET UP SHOP OUTSIDE THE E! ENTERtainment building along the Miracle Mile, and there's a scrum of people eating and waiting to eat. A cyclist in a Giro d'Italia outfit waits his turn. So do two workers in Dockers and rumpled shirts. In the front, a woman in incredibly high suede heels places her order at the window, while the guy behind me snaps pictures of the scene with his iPhone. » Food trucks have become something of a motif—maybe *mania* is a better word—on the L.A. streetscape in the past year. Jamaican jerk, French crepes, Korean *bibimbap*, Southern chicken and waffles, samosas, dim sum, grilled cheese, old-school tacos, new-school tacos, pita pockets, buttermilk biscuits—suddenly you can get a couple hemispheres' worth of cuisines from a galley kitchen on wheels. Clustered behind the UCLA Medical Center or along a dispiriting stretch near LACMA, the city's fleet of brightly colored food trucks has inspired hungry flash mobs, spawning street life where there wasn't any. In L.A., that's a good thing. » Despite all the recent clamor, the city has had a long-term relationship with food trucks. Roach coaches have supplied construction sites for decades with greasy burgers and Mentos, a Klaxon signaling their arrival. It's probably safe to say few people took mobile food seriously—or had any reason to—before taco trucks began plying neighborhoods with *lengua* and *carne asada* and *cemitas*, the sandwich roll from the Mexican state of Puebla. Docked in El Sereno and Highland Park and Boyle Heights, sporting modest names such as Gorditas Lupita's and topped with gill-like vents, they've become woven into the city's fabric. The food can be uneven from vendor to vendor, but standing streetside, eating a taco filled with stewed meats and cilantro has a way of making a person feel more connected to our disconnected metropolis.

A year and a half ago, Roy Choi, a former hotel cook, rolled onto the streets with a variation on the theme. The Kogi truck melded two cultures in one kimchi quesadilla. It wasn't just how the fermented and spicy Korean cabbage ignited the Mexican standby; the layers of flavors

Photographs by **JESSICA BOONE**

felt like a compression of the city itself, and so did his truck, with its giant graffiti logo looking as if it had been lifted right off the concrete banks of the L.A. River. Announcing his arrival with a tweet rather than a horn blast, Choi was soon attracting lines of people hungry for something different. He was followed by droves of other itinerant kitchens—some of them original, others knockoffs, and most launched with the help of Road Stoves, a downtown operation that provides everything from the logo-wrapped vans to the insurance to the supplies.

Food trucks, the new ones at least, are not the modest enterprises that have anchored Latino neighborhoods for so long. You can find ones proffering artisanal soda pairings (Frysmith), recherché ingredients such as pimento-spiced Yakima salt (Vizzi), and eco-mindedness (the Green Truck with its grass-fed beef). At times, though, it's as if they use the excuse of being mobile to take liberties that no restaurant could get away with: A worker goes from handling money to making meals in one truck; food sits out unrefrigerated in another; at a third, the cranky counterman refuses to turn down his music, even though customers can't hear him speak. For now it's a seller's market, which means that the people waiting for their meal don't always get what they want before the teeny kitchens run out of food. "We're done," the guy operating a Kogi truck (there are four now) announced to the queue one afternoon and began packing up. A little contrition—or something less cavalier—would have been swell. I suppose one has to expect some potholes along the road as Angelenos redefine their food scene.

Haitian and Jamaican trucks abound in Brooklyn, and Portland, Oregon, has a central square devoted to food carts. But I can't help thinking that mobile gastronomy has reached a high point here, given the breadth—cultural and physical—L.A.'s fleets must cover. Food on wheels: What could be more natural for a city built around the automobile? Owners of brick-and-mortar restaurants complain about such mobility, maintaining that the trucks siphon off the lunch rush. They may be right, but to see a long line at one truck and none at another is to understand that competition between them is brutal. Outfitted with clattering utensils, the rolling restaurants draw on principles of convenience that have defined American street food since the first pickle was sold from a barrel. But being so attuned to notions of branding and social networking, they're propelling a proud tradition out of the era of the sepia print and into the digital age.

Their food can be bloody good, too. That Bool BBQ *taco al carbon* was magnificent. The fiery slaw defined the meat, playing off the flavor of the grill with a combination of heat and acidity. Whether it was more Korean than Mexican, I couldn't tell, but as I wiped my chin and pushed the paper napkin through the truck's trash flap, the amalgam seemed completely of Los Angeles. By two o'clock the truck, along with the other three behind it, had brought in their garbage cans and lowered the blinds over the order window. The driver of one truck sat behind the wheel, a sandwich clenched in his hand, finally eating his own lunch. In a few minutes, they'd driven off, and the sidewalk was already back to being empty.

ASSUME THE POSITION



THE METER MAID

Bring quarters—when knife and fork are a must, any surface becomes a table.



THE PICNIC LAP

Curbs double as seats, but note: The five-second rule doesn't apply to the gutter.



THE LEAN-TO

A deep bend at the hips will keep pork belly drippings off your boots.



BEEF GYRO

LOUKS

Undeconstructed, with lemon and oregano sharpening the thinly sliced meat inside the chewy pocket.



TACO AL CARBON

BOOL BBQ

The perfect mash-up of coal-grilled beef crowned with spicy-sweet slaw and raw diced onion.



CALIFORNIA DOG

DOGTOWN DOGS

A plump beef wiener dressed in arugula, avocado, fried onions, and basil aioli.



TAMARIND DUCK TACO

FLYING PIG

Braised duck meat with almond slivers, beets, and sprouts wrapped in a warm corn tortilla.



ICE CREAM SANDWICH

COOLHAUS

Lots of options, including a deliciously untraditional balsamic fig ice cream in a brioche-like biscuit.

5 WAYS TO FOLLOW THAT TRUCK!

FINDLAFOODTRUCKS.COM: See the Twitter feeds on a single page. It's a great blog to boot. **LA.TRUXMAP.COM:** X marks the spots on this map, and traffic info helps you decide whether that *roti* roll-up is worth the trek to Abbot Kinney. **ROAMINGHUNGER.COM:** View a slew of truck tweets, or log in to rate and recommend your favorites. **CLUSTERTRUCK.ORG:** Click the truck logos on a live map to get the details. **ROAD STOVES IPHONE APP:** GPS units attached to many top-rated trucks provide real-time locations.

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HAM AND BRIE

Joan's on Third, 8350 W. 3rd St., L.A.

The classic ham and cheese goes luxe with generous hunks of buttery Brie.



MARINATED ARTICHOKE

La Brea Bakery, 624 S. La Brea Ave., L.A.

Ricotta complements the tangy artichoke hearts on La Brea's famous olive bread.



SPICY COMBO

Mario's Italian Deli, 740 E. Broadway, Glendale

There's a bonus layer of hot peppers in this triple-decker done Italian style.



DÖNER KEBAB

Spitz, 2506 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock

A salad's worth of veggies lightens this Middle Eastern-inspired classic.



THE GODMOTHER

Bay Cities Italian Deli, 1517 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica

It's like a religion: house-baked *ciabatta*, Italian cold cuts, and the works.



OINKSTER PASTRAMI

The Oinkster, 2005 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock

The pastrami here is applewood smoked, house cured, and topped with red cabbage slaw.



SPANISH TURKEY

Artisan Cheese Gallery, 12023 Ventura Blvd., Studio City

Whole cloves of roasted garlic stud the cheesy grilled sandwich.

SANDWICHES

HANDHELD FEASTS ARE THE BEST THINGS SINCE SLICED BREAD*



AHOGADA
Cook's Tortas, 1944 S. Atlantic Blvd., Monterey Park

Grab extra napkins—this slow-cooked pork sandwich is double dipped in a red-hot sauce.



CHICKEN SALAD
Gram & Papa's, 227 E. 9th St., downtown

Made with fat chunks of grilled chicken, the salad comes on a puffy pretzel bun.



TONGUE
Attari Sandwich Shop, 1388 Westwood Blvd., West L.A.

The "other" dark meat is superb, but it's the snap of the pickles that makes it.



PORK BANH MI
Banh Mi My Tho, 304 W. Valley Blvd., Alhambra

It's all things in one: cool, crisp veggies and hot, sweet pork stuffed in a squishy baguette.



THE THC
Sando's Sub Shop, 312 Rosecrans Ave., Manhattan Beach

Turkey, ham, and provolone make for a heady combination. Don't worry, it's legal.



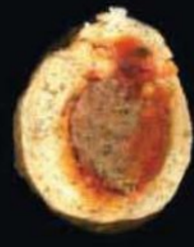
CAPASTRAMI
Capriotti's, 9683 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills

There's a liberal slather of Russian dressing on this hot pastrami sub.



CUBANO
Porto's Bakery, 315 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale

A top-notch traditional Cuban with ham, pork, Swiss, pickles, and mustard.



MEATBALL
All About the Bread, 7111 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood

The bread's bubbly crust is matched only by the tart marinara sauce.



ROASTED LAMB AND FETA
Papa Cristo's, 2771 W. Pico Blvd., L.A.

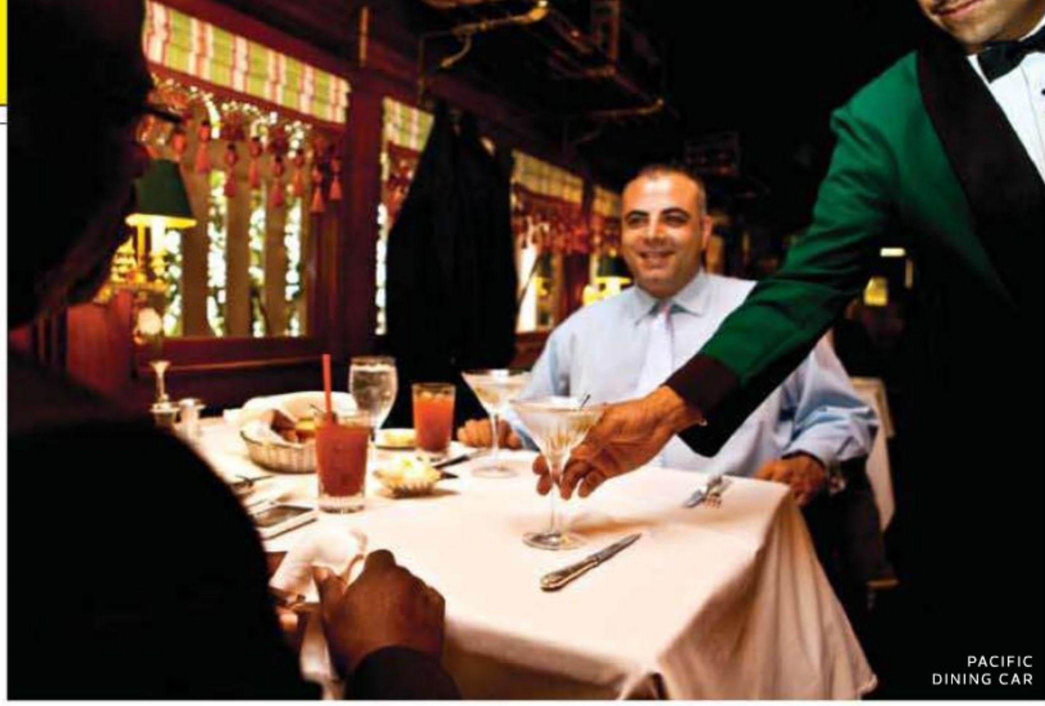
As Greek as it gets: roasted leg of lamb with creamy feta. Don't forget the peppers.



BEEF DIP
Philippe's, 1001 N. Alameda St., downtown

Only a smear of spicy mustard can improve on the roast beef original.

*We weren't the first to scan our favorite sandwiches. See one food lover's use of office equipment at Scanwiches.com.



PACIFIC DINING CAR

[4] HIGH-CLASS SPOTS WITH LOW-COST LUNCHES

COMME ÇA

8479 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 323-782-1104 or commecarestaurant.com

David Myers's hip bistro delivers two courses of brasserie classics for $20. Spend the money you save on an afternoon rum fizz.

HATFIELD'S

6703 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323-935-2977 or hatfieldsrestaurant.com

Karen and Quinn Hatfield put on a show in their glass-walled kitchen. Maybe that's why the $19 three-course lunch has been dubbed the "Studio" prix fixe.

LA CACHETTE BISTRO

1733 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, 310-434-9509 or lacachettebistro.com

Enjoy the ocean breeze on the patio as you tuck into Jean-François Meteigner's $15 three-course Cal-French meal.

MAISON AKIRA

713 E. Green St., Pasadena, 626-796-9501 or maisonakira.com

The $12.50 Bento Box du Jour from Akira Hirose offers a frugal taste of Japanese-French fusion.



LUNCH WITH A TWIST

ONE WRITER ASKS WHAT BECAME OF THE NOONTIME THREE-MARTINI EXTRAVAGANZA—AND DISCOVERS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY IT

BY DAVE GARDETTA

RAYMOND CHANDLER, THE BESOTTED PRINCE OF L.A. NOIR, IS SAID to have once signed a contract during a three-martini lunch to write a screenplay. The contract stipulated that he could remain drunk while finishing *The Blue Dahlia*, and he did so inside of two weeks. Now that's American efficiency. » Whatever happened to that time-honored ritual, the olive-spiked lunch trifecta? When I recently sat down in L.A.'s citadel of old-school capitalism and cholesterol, the Pacific Dining Car, and announced my desire to revive the custom, an attentive waiter named Daniel confided, "You are only the second three-martini lunch I've served here in 13 years." » This was my plan: three gin doubles (the equivalent of a 12-ounce beer can of grain spirits), one wedge of iceberg lettuce smothered in Roquefort, and one 16-ounce rib eye with creamed spinach. I'd brought along an older acquaintance, whose longtime job running a large corporation made him an expert on the business lunch. "Up into the '70s," he said, half a martini down, "the managers making deals were hard-charging guys who'd come up through the ranks, and you'd see steaks and martinis at lunch any day of the week."

Making deals? I could already feel an amphibian glaze coating my eyeballs as I nodded dumbly at the second drink and my cheeks were lighting up like Christmas trees. "You're beginning to look drunk," my friend observed as Daniel delivered a steak the size of a Fendi bag.

People have theorized that the three-martini lunch died because of the power breakfast. But my friend cited another reason: increasing competitiveness.

Back in the day, the boardrooms of American business were WASPs' nests: Jews, women, blacks, and anyone who didn't attend Choate were shut out. The lack of competition meant more time for elbow bending—time we can't imagine wasting today. Juicy steaks and icy cocktails have been replaced by succulent BlackBerrys and refreshing Webinars.

Sometime into my third martini I noticed that the combination of dry-aged protein and nonstop gin was energizing both my mind and body. No longer was I blinking at the world like a blushing salamander. Now I felt like a Master of the Universe.

"Here's a news flash," my friend slurred, holding up his wristwatch. "You and I have been sitting here for four-and-a-half hours." We'd argued politics, traded jokes, talked about women, and laughed until Tanqueray shot out our noses. "It's this kind of camaraderie," he said, "that's really been lost with the three-martini lunch."

TOP: MINDEE CHOI



BOWL CUTS

LA SCALA

434 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-275-0579 or lascalabeverlyhills.com

LOS ANGELES is largely to thank for the concept of salad as entrée, now a lunchtime staple. The folks at La Scala coined the phrase "chopped salad," and the 54-year-old restaurant still hand chops more than 400 a day. As for the Cobb, it was invented in 1937 at L.A.'s legendary Brown Derby. To sensible lunchers everywhere, you're welcome.



Choose Your Own!

22 CUSTOM LUNCH PICKS

WORK OR PLAY, SUN OR SHADE, FILLING OR REFRESHING—WE FOUND THE RIGHT LUNCH FOR YOU

START HERE

IS IT **BUSINESS?** — YES → "THE BUSINESS"? / NO →

"THE BUSINESS"? — NO → HAVE AN EXPENSE ACCOUNT? / YES → DO YOU MIND THE FLASHBULBS?

HAVE **AN EXPENSE ACCOUNT?** — YES → DIG BLOOD SAUSAGE? / NO → PUTTING THEM IN THE HOT SEAT?

DIG **BLOOD SAUSAGE?** — YES → BOUCHON / NO → WATER GRILL

PUTTING THEM IN THE **HOT SEAT?** — YES → OROCHON / NO → NEED TO IMPRESS?

NEED TO **IMPRESS?** — YES → CIUDAD / NO → CANTER'S

DO YOU **MIND THE FLASHBULBS?** — NO → THE IVY / YES → SOMEONE FROM CAA?

SOMEONE FROM **CAA?** — YES → JUST GOT A BIG RESIDUALS CHECK? / NO → FROM WILLIAM MORRIS?

FROM **WILLIAM MORRIS?** — YES → MR. CHOW / NO → WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SHOW BUSINESS, RIGHT?

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT **SHOW BUSINESS, RIGHT?** — YES → THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY / NO → CANTER'S

JUST GOT A **BIG RESIDUALS CHECK?** — YES → CRAFT / NO → CRAFTBAR

WATER GRILL

544 S. Grand Ave., downtown

Weighty matters don't require a heavy meal. The alternative? A raw bar and some of the city's finest seafood dishes (many using sustainable fish) from chef David LeFevre.



OROCHON

123 S. Onizuka St., downtown

Little Tokyo's spiciest ramen shop is just the place to flaunt your chopstick skills, while the infernal Special #2 makes your colleague sweat. A bowl costs less than $7.

CIUDAD

445 S. Figueroa St., downtown

In Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger's ultramodern, upscale Latin American restaurant, order a Cuban sandwich with Niman Ranch pork or crispy potato tacos—plus a cookie—for $10.



BOUCHON

235 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills

Thomas Keller guides the menu of heavenly French staples. Good luck making it back to the office after a *croque madame* with L.A.'s best french fries.





MR. CHOW

344 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills

You could walk from your agent's office—if you did that sort of thing. Try the Emperor's crab, Beijing-style duck, and Mr. Chow noodles, with schmoozing on the side.

THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY

9560 Dayton Way, Beverly Hills

Peek over the booths to see who might be turning that short into a feature, or eat like the flick is already a classic, with a meal of steak and shrimp cocktail.

THE IVY

113 N. Robertson Blvd., L.A.

On the paparazzi-swarmed patio, you'll get more attention than the grilled chicken salad and the wood-fired pizza, but those chocolate chip cookies just might steal the spotlight.

CRAFT

10100 Constellation Blvd., Century City

In the shadow of CAA, the economic slowdown is nowhere in sight. Chef Tom Colicchio has a way with big proteins like hanger steak and Liberty Farms duck.



CRAFTBAR

10100 Constellation Blvd., Century City

If it's still a few weeks until payday, Craft's front patio boasts sexy cabanas and lower-priced small plates such as crispy pork belly and *burrata* flatbreads.

CANTER'S

419 N. Fairfax Ave., L.A.

The ultimate deli lunch: tuna on rye, black-and-white cookies, and snappy waitresses. If you think it'll help get the creative juices flowing, make it a liquid lunch at the bar in back.

BOUCHON: LISA ROMEREIN; WATER GRILL: SHUTTERSTOCK

LEMONADE
9001 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood

Dine on corned beef sandwiches, lamb *tagines*, and quinoa salads at this contemporary version of an international buffet. The spacious patio lined with greenery is as sunny as it is hip.

FARMERS MARKET
6333 W. 3rd St., L.A.

For the indecisive, the shade-covered food stalls at the 3rd and Fairfax lunchtime landmark sling everything from *moules frites* to pizza to enchiladas.

SWEETSALT FOOD SHOP
10218½ Riverside Dr., Toluca Lake

Come noon, it's hard to find a seat among the folks enjoying sandwiches with fancy cheeses, salads with roasted veggies, and bacon-flecked popcorn.

HUCKLEBERRY
1014 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica

Zoe Nathan bakes all the breads for her café's California-fresh sandwiches (which inspired the one on our cover), but her skills really shine in the pastries.



FORGOT YOUR **SPF 90?** — NO: Lemonade; YES: Farmers Market

THE VALLEY OK? — YES: Sweetsalt Food Shop; NO: Plan on having dessert?

PLAN ON **HAVING DESSERT?** — YES: Huckleberry; NO: Tender Greens



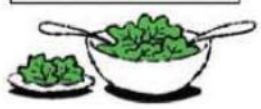


GOOD AT **SCHLEPPING A FOOD TRAY?** — YES: Forgot your SPF 90?; NO: Strict vegetarian?

STRICT VEGETARIAN? — NO: The Valley OK?; YES: But craving that burger sensation?

TENDER GREENS
9523 Culver Blvd., Culver City

Lettuce is just the start. Find flatiron steaks, soups like roma tomato and basil, and yes, impressive salads—dubbed "simple" or "big."





SPLURGING? — NO: Good at schlepping a food tray?; YES: Hankering for fish eggs?

POLO LOUNGE
9641 Sunset Blvd., Beverly Hills

Ladies who lunch gush over lobster and McCarthy salads on the patio at this Beverly Hills institution. Don't forget the shades—they're essential for people watching.

TAVERN
11648 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood

Leave it to superchef and mother of three Suzanne Goin to add a kids' menu to her swank Brentwood destination. For the little one? Fish and chips. For you? *Salade niçoise.*

M CAFÉ DE CHAYA
7119 Melrose Ave., Hollywood

Experience innovative vegetarian cuisine from this macrobiotic mainstay. Gorge on health with avocado tofu rolls and tangy tempeh wraps.



HANKERING FOR **FISH EGGS?** — YES: Care for some new jeans with that beluga?; NO: Own any Chanel?

OWN ANY **CHANEL?** — YES: Polo Lounge; NO: Got a tyke?

GOT A TYKE? — YES: Tavern; NO: Drago Centro

BUT CRAVING THAT **BURGER SENSATION?** — NO: M Café de Chaya; YES: Veggie Grill



CARE FOR SOME **NEW JEANS WITH THAT BELUGA?** — YES: Barney Greengrass; NO: Petrossian





BARNEY GREENGRASS
9570 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills

Nibble caviar with your bagel and shmear at this rest stop for Barneys shoppers. Sure, the prices are high, but so is the perch on the fifth floor.

PETROSSIAN
321 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood

Take a break from window shopping for blini topped with caviar or a trio of smoked salmon. If you never thought borscht could be chic, think again.

DRAGO CENTRO
525 S. Flower St., downtown

This ode to Italian cuisine is both unpretentious and upscale. Too early to dive into the gigantic tower o' wine? Tuck into the *pappardelle al fagiano* instead.

VEGGIE GRILL
8000 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood

Who says meat free means comfort free? The faux-fried chicken is spot-on and the texture of that grilled steak burger almost too real.

DRAGO CENTRO: GINA SABATELLA; FARMERS MARKET, PETROSSIAN: SHUTTERSTOCK

LUNCH IS ANYTHING BUT A BREAK FOR HOLLYWOOD'S PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS. A FORMER PA TELLS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BATTLE TRAFFIC, TICKETS, AND SPILLS ONLY TO HEAR...

I SAID DRESSING ON THE SIDE!

WHEN YOU MOVE TO L.A. to work in Hollywood, there's no clear path. But if you don't get broken down and don't give up, you'll get there. That's what being a production assistant is all about.

I've worked as a PA at DreamWorks and at Sony. Being a PA is very much like a hazing ritual. The goal is to get a reputation as someone who's really hard-core and unflappable. But, oh, man, do you have every opportunity to be flapped. Especially when it comes to delivering lunch.

Lunch pickup is a job that PAs who work for TV shows typically do for the writers and producers. It is daily torture. It never gets better. It never gets easier. Imagine you are Indiana Jones going deep into some temple to capture the sacred stone and then running out of the temple past the huge rolling boulder and the poisonous spears. When you get back to the office and show the person who ordered the sacred stone what you've brought them, they're, like, "Didn't I have a side salad with that sacred stone?" That is daily lunch pickup, and I did it for nine months for a sitcom at Sony.

AS TOLD TO AMY WALLACE

Here's how it worked: First you'd take down orders, with all their specifications. No onions. Coleslaw instead of fries. Extra fries. You learned to pay attention, checking your roster to make sure you didn't forget anyone. You'd fax the order in, to the Farm or Kate Mantilini or wherever. Then you'd get in your crappy car (all PAs have midsize crappy cars) and drive to Beverly Hills during the lunch rush. Parking was hell. You needed to park close because you had to get out fast before the food got too cold. You'd hear about it if it was cold. So you'd hit handicapped spaces or pull up to red curbs, putting your flashers on.

You'd go into the restaurant, hoping the food was ready. It never was. When it finally came out, you'd have to check the orders, which was complicated by the fact that because a lot of these places have gone green, you couldn't see through the cartons. So you'd be dealing with four bags of crappy cardboard containers that some person in the kitchen had scrawled some hieroglyphic code on. You'd take each container out, cross-reference it with your list to make sure not only that everyone's lunch was in there, but that it was correct. Messing up the order of anybody serious—like the producers—could get you fired.

After checking the orders, you'd get the lukewarm food back into the bags and head out to your car, which you hoped was still there. Then came the mad dash back to the office. You'd be calling your fellow PAs as you drove, or they'd be calling you to say, "Where are you?" To which you'd say, "Well, I'm picking up lunch!"

There's something about those bags—they're too big to fit snugly on your floorboards so they won't fall over and yet just small enough to slide around in your backseat. Often it would be one hand on the wheel, one hand making sure the precious items in the front seat didn't tip over. While you were frantically driving, there'd be a lot of slamming on the brakes. Stuff would spill. Sometimes whole dishes spilled onto the floor. The only chance for redemption was calling in and letting everyone know it had spilled, then delivering the rest of the food and going back. Or getting something from the studio restaurant, which nobody ever used. The commissary? I don't think so!

When you got back to the office, there was the fun of seeing the expressions on people's faces as they opened their preopened cardboard container and took a nice, hard look at their congealing food. Their faces said total nonsatisfaction. As in, "Well, I guess I can keep this down." Then, comments: "I think this was supposed to be grilled." In general, it was, "OK, I'm miserable now because of you. But it's fine. I'll get over it. Until tomorrow." ✿







THE ICE KING

Our PA also dishes on how Jeffrey Katzenberg takes his meetings on the rocks

At DreamWorks Animation, they have free lunch. So as a PA there, you don't have to pick up food. But you do have to get Jeffrey Katzenberg's ice. At the campus in Glendale, there is an office. It is unmarked. And I think it's guarded by some type of demon. In that office is a refrigerator. The refrigerator makes a specific kind of ice that Jeffrey likes, a cylindrical ice, with a hole in it. This refrigerator, which has its own office, makes ice. For Jeffrey. Only for Jeffrey. Jeffrey's life is meetings. And the meetings are in different rooms. But this refrigerator office is not near any of them. It is the PA's job to figure out exactly where Jeffrey is going to sit at each meeting and then to place, to his right, a certain type of glass filled to a very specific level with the special office ice. Next to the glass goes a little bottle of Diet Coke. Here's the problem: Meetings are often pushed. Jeffrey's earlier meeting is running long. So all of a sudden the perfect glass of ice has water in it. Now it's a judgment call: Can I get this glass filled with fresh ice and be back here before the meeting starts? And you're running down hallways, through buildings, with a glass of ice in your hand, and people see you and laugh and say, "You better hurry up! Jeffrey's coming!"



THE DRINK

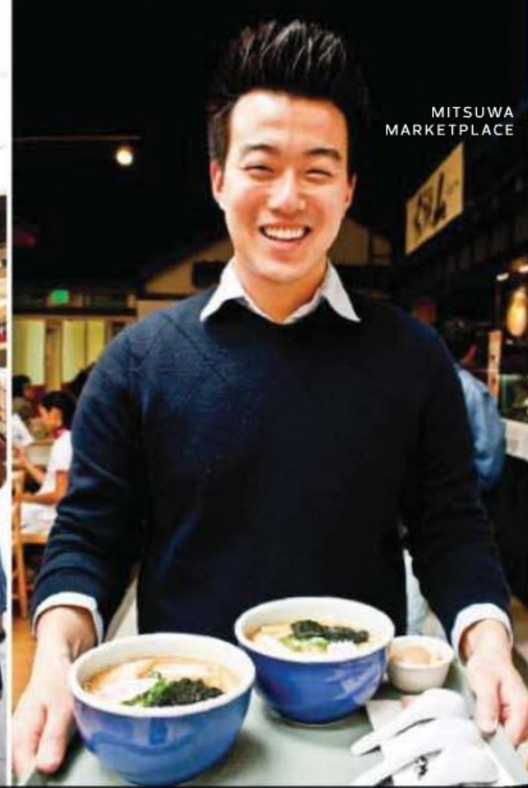
COFFEE? NOPE. SODA? Oh, please. Black, green, or passion fruit infused, iced tea is the official beverage of lunch. Its bitter kick too mild for the morning but too brisk for the dinner table, this chilly refreshment is exclusive to the hours of Cobbs and clubs. Shun the pink and blue packets—a lemon wedge will do.



THE BLOGGER

ZACH BROOKS started Midtown Lunch (midtownlunch.com) in New York when he tired of the same ol' food chains near his office. The former music programmer relocated to L.A. in January, where he seeks out affordable, everyday options that are worth a little extra effort. "The blog is about getting off your butt and taking that hour—which you have every legal right to—and enjoying yourself. It makes the last four hours of the day a lot easier, unless it's an all-you-can eat buffet."





MITSUWA MARKETPLACE

DAY IN COURT

BEHOLD THE BASTION of soggy pizza and greasy corn dogs that is the American food court. Throughout Asia, however, entire floors of shopping centers are dedicated to everything from bubbling hot pots to sweet gems of colorful *mochi*. In L.A., similar hubs of top-notch ethnic cuisine have sprung up inside the malls of immigrant communities from Torrance to Koreatown. Grab a tray and dig in. By Noah Galuten

MITSUWA MARKETPLACE

21515 S. Western Ave., Torrance, 310-782-0335 or mitsuwa.com

Come lunchtime, this upscale mall is host to what seems like the bulk of Torrance's dense Japanese population. Around small wooden tables, locals slurp bouncy ramen in pork broth from Santouka and *oyakodon* (chicken, egg, and green onion simmered in a sweet sauce and served over rice) from Miyabi-Tei. To cool off, try an iced *matcha* from the tea experts at Yamamotoyama. Can't tell *udon* from *soba*? The plastic models outside most stalls are a helpful visual aid.

KOREATOWN PLAZA

928 S. Western Ave., L.A., 213-382-1234 or koreatownplaza.com

The windowless food court is stuck in the basement of this 1980s-era shopping center. But though atmosphere is lacking, crowds are not. The mostly Korean clientele (always a good sign) flocks here for fiery red broth with pieces of bone-in pork or hunks of spicy fish. Juicy pork cutlets from Tonkatsu House are breaded and fried and accompanied by shredded cabbage slathered with—what else?—Thousand Island dressing.

KOREATOWN GALLERIA

3250 W. Olympic Blvd., L.A., 323-733-6000 or koreatowngalleria.com

Just blocks from Koreatown Plaza, the Galleria's top-floor food court is spacious—and of this century—with large windows and a railing overlooking the shops. Skip the pricey Japanese *spaghetti bolognese* for a light lunch of *yachae boribap* from the Cham Cham Cham stall. A bowl of rice and barley is topped with a crisp romaine salad and a fried egg, a seemingly innocuous trio that becomes addictive once mixed together, especially when it's with a little chili sauce.

MERCADO LA PALOMA

3655 S. Grand Ave., L.A., 213-748-1963 or mercadolapaloma.com

Once an abandoned warehouse, Mercado La Paloma opened in 2006 with hopes of revitalizing the neighborhood just south of downtown. Among the vendors at the squeaky-clean marketplace is newcomer Mo-Chica, whose Peruvian ceviche is the city's brightest. Chichen Itza specializes in the flavors of the Yucatán, such as slow-cooked pork tacos and fat tamales that are baked until crispy.

Additional reporting for LUNCH IN L.A. by Michael Limbo

MITSUWA: MINDEE CHOI; ICED TEA: ISTOCKPHOTO

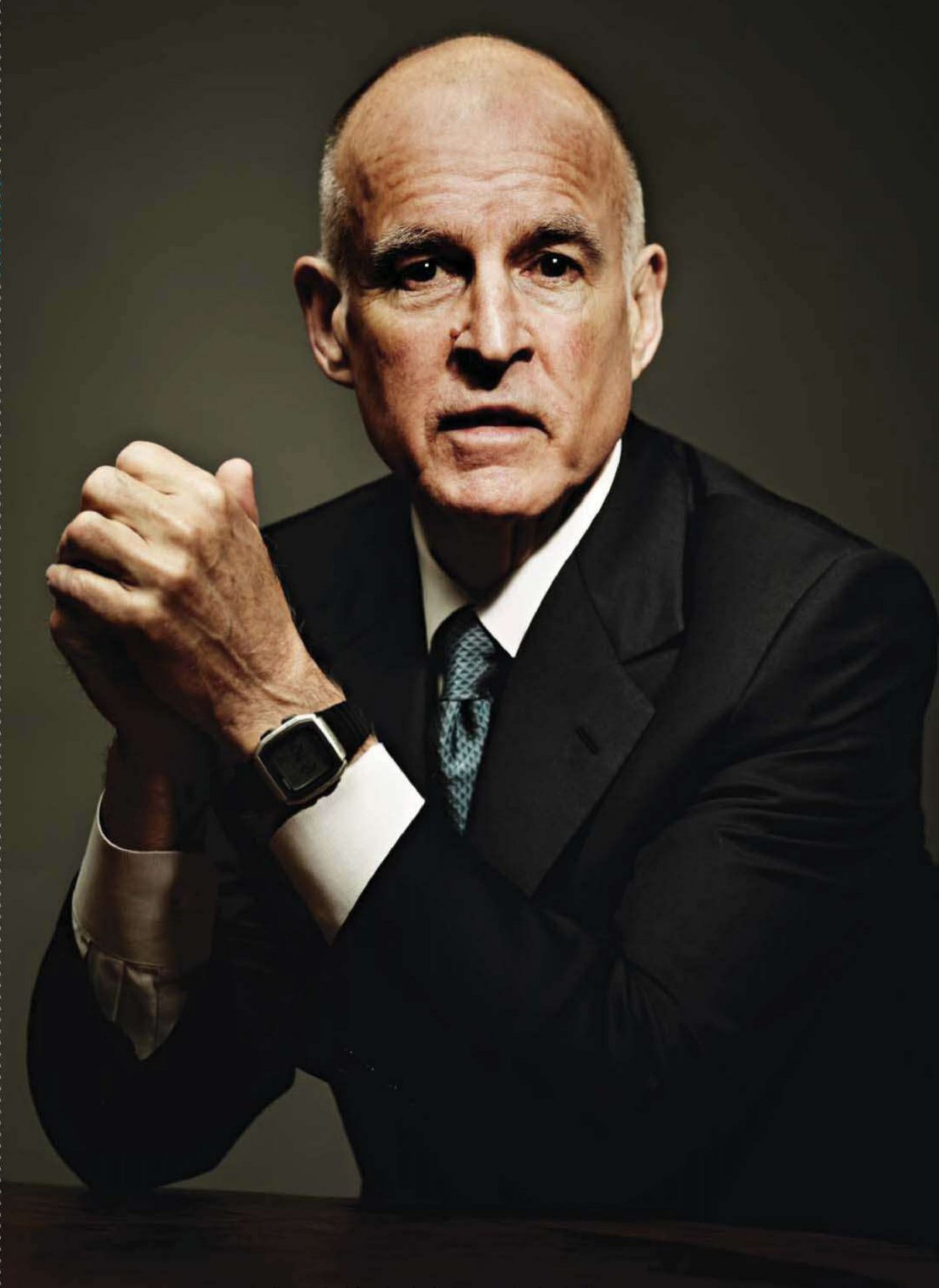


STEAM HEAT

LANGER'S

704 S. Alvarado St., L.A.,
213-483-8050
or langersdeli.com

THE PASTRAMI at Langer's is one of L.A.'s seven wonders, and we'd put it in the running for best in the world. But what makes it so tender? "We steam the meat for two-and-a-half to five hours to bring it to 209 degrees," says owner Norm Langer. At this temperature the meat is soft enough to allow for those thick, juicy, hand-cut slices.



The Seeker

JB

→Why would a former two-term governor and lifelong politician want to run a state that can't be governed?
A Q&A with Jerry Brown

BY ED LEIBOWITZ
PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX FARNUM

SECOND TERM →
Brown at UCLA during the 1978 gubernatorial campaign

When considering his career, California attorney general Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr. likes to invoke the word *evolution*. The son of celebrated California governor Pat Brown became secretary of state at 32 and won his first gubernatorial election four years later, serving two terms. He also ran populist long-shot presidential campaigns in 1976, 1980, and 1992. In the mid-'90s, he declared himself "a recovering politician" and became a public radio talk-show host, making observations about spirituality and the electoral system that weren't exactly, well, politic. Then he quit to become mayor of Oakland in '98, shifted back toward pragmatism, and helped reclaim the city's beleaguered downtown.

As a septuagenarian, Brown is reseeking the governor's office in a state that has devolved into essentially the same sorry condition it was in when he first took office 35 years ago. Now, as then, California is reeling from massive joblessness, soaring oil prices, environmental degradation, and an economic downturn so severe it has raised fears of another Great Depression. Once again Brown is vying to replace a Hollywood actor who came to Sacramento with no experience in public service and is leaving the state in worse shape than when he arrived.

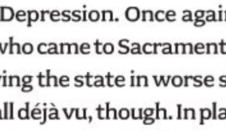
It hasn't been all déjà vu, though. In place of his pop singer girlfriend, Linda Ronstadt, is Brown's wife, lawyer and onetime Gap executive Anne Gust (he married for the first time at age 67). And none of his rivals in '74 was a billionaire, as is former eBay CEO Meg Whitman, who has become the likely Republican nominee, in part by spending $27 million on her campaign in the first 11 weeks of this year. We met with Brown in Oakland at the converted grocery warehouse that serves as his campaign headquarters, where he tucked into a few slices of his wife's left-over birthday cake and ate prunes out of a yogurt tub. The presumptive Democratic nominee (the primary is June 8) talked about the campaign, the state of the state, and being a politician who never quite fit in.

Why would you again want to serve as governor of a California that has the worst credit rating of all 50 states, will face a deficit of more than $20 billion by next summer, and is tied for having the third-highest unemployment rate in the country? And we also have a gross domestic product of $1.8 trillion, which makes California an economy greater than all the countries of the world except seven or eight. So the potential is still fantastic. The workforce, the climate, and the culture of innovation all make California a magnet to the world despite its temporary setbacks.

It was also a pretty lousy time for California and the nation the last time you became governor—the oil crisis, stagflation, a looming state deficit, high unemployment. How would you compare the severity of that era with the one we're living in now? Today we're in the aftershocks of the wild excesses on Wall Street and the financialization of the American economy whereby those who work in finance are paid enormous bonuses while huge parts of the rest of America are forced to take less and some are even immiserated. We're in a different world now that the federal government has allowed a leveraging of as high as 40 to 1 to become the order of the day, with hundreds of billions—if not trillions—of dollars of our wealth. In terms of the confidence in

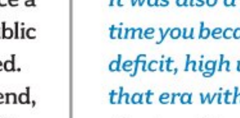
Always On the Run

→ From spiritual wanderer to political prodigy to veteran pol—the life of Jerry Brown



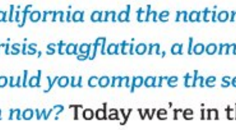
1938
Special Delivery
Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr., son and namesake of future California governor Edmund "Pat" Brown, is born on April 7 in San Francisco.

1956
Higher Calling
Enters Sacred Heart Novitiate in Los Gatos, where he'll take his Jesuit vows and live a cloistered life for four years before quitting to study classics at Berkeley. Attends Yale Law School after graduation.



1965–69
White Shoe, Left Shoe
Joins the L.A. corporate law firm of Tuttle & Taylor and goes on to organize migrant workers and anti-Vietnam War coalitions. Elected to the L.A. Community College board.

1971
Music Lover
Assumes office as California's secretary of state; meets future girlfriend, pop star Linda Ronstadt, at Lucy's El Adobe across from Paramount. Relationship lasts more than a decade.



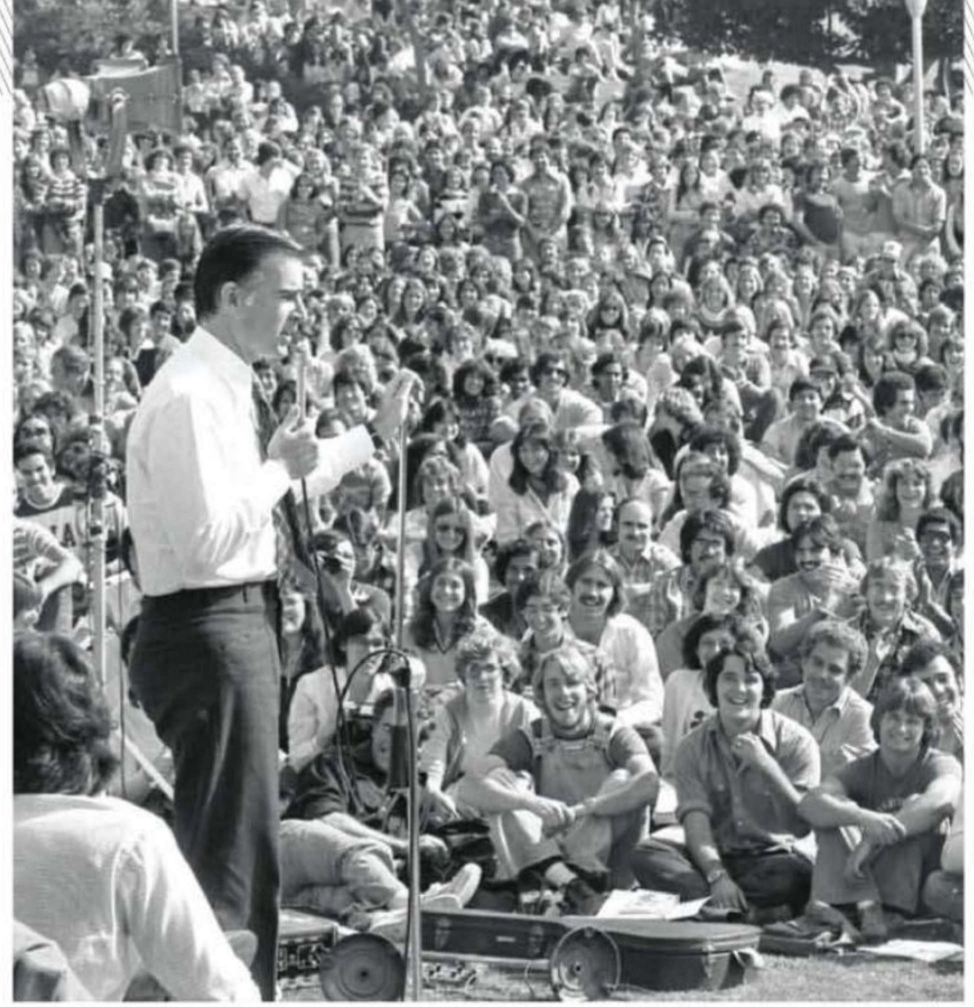
1975
Self-Driven
Becomes California governor at age 36. Will launch two of his three unsuccessful bids for the Democratic presidential nomination during his eight years in office.

TOP RIGHT: UCLA CHARLES E. YOUNG RESEARCH LIBRARY, DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES/© REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, UCLA LIBRARY; TIMELINE (FROM LEFT): COURTESY JERRY BROWN (4); JOHN STOREY/CORBIS; RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP IMAGES

government, in the banking institutions, in people's savings and their future financial security—all of these have been undermined far greater than was the case in 1974.

Why do you think you are the only Democratic candidate running in advance of the primary? I have no idea. People run for all sorts of reasons. It's opportunity. It's the people with the money or the name who can run. There was [U.S. congressman John] Garamendi, there was [U.S. congresswoman] Jackie Speier, there was Mayor Villaraigosa, and Mayor Newsom, Senator Feinstein—these were all people who considered it.

Considered it, maybe, but didn't actively vie for it. Does it surprise you that you're alone here? Politics doesn't surprise me. Obviously people calculated that it was not worth the effort. I have a strong following in the Democratic Party, so anyone who did run would have a difficult time winning the primary, and if they did, they would be depleted for a general election.



People were made aware that you wanted to run more than a year ago, but you only declared in early March. Why the wait? Did you turn over in your mind whether it was "worth the effort"? Certainly I did give it a lot of thought, and I didn't rush the decision. These kinds of decisions are not so easy to parse. I understand California. I've been here all my life. My parents lived here all their lives. My grandparents lived here all their lives. My great-grandparents on my father's side came across the plains in a covered wagon. I have a sense of the history and the possibilities, so it's natural for me, seeing the challenges and having been governor and attorney general, to want to jump in.

Which attributes do you think qualify you best to lead the state through these troubled times? Familiarity and understanding of the dynamics of state government, local government, politics, and the California economy. Those are all crucial elements in the governing of the state, so I would think that would be very helpful. Instead of someone who has virtually never voted, has only an indifferent interest in government or politics to wake up and say, "Well, I have all this extra capital, so I guess I'll run for governor." That seems to me a far thinner set of credentials, given the enormous challenges we face.

In the mid-'90s, on the Bay Area radio show you hosted, you delivered a grim prognosis of money's undue influence on political campaigns, saying, "If you spend more, your chances are nine out of ten or eight out of ten that you are going to win. Nobody in power can get there without mortgaging themselves to the tune of several million." Assuming that Meg Whitman gets the Republican nomination, and assuming she spends the $150 million she's set aside for her campaign, how do you beat nine to one odds against you? Very difficult. A private takeover of the public airwaves through the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars has never been attempted before. It's almost akin to a totalitarian ministry of information. Now [CONTINUED ON PAGE 158]



1983–88
Wanderlust
After a failed run for the U.S. Senate, travels to Mexico, China, and the Soviet Union, spends half a year in a Zen monastery in Japan, and works at Mother Teresa's side.

1989
Power of the Purse
Wins election as chairman of the California Democratic Party, gaining political muscle over campaign funds.



1995
Open Mic
Moves to Oakland, where he hosts the freewheeling public radio show *We the People*, frequently denouncing money's sway over politics.

1998
Born Again
Reinvents his political career when he is elected mayor of Oakland. Focusing on crime reduction and urban redevelopment, he will be reelected with 64 percent of the vote.



2007
Law and Order
Takes the oath as California's attorney general; implements mandatory sentencing for crimes, such as the sale of heroin and violence against the elderly.

2010
Back for More
Announces candidacy for California governor, becoming the only serious Democratic contender.

The Out-Siders

» Some Angelenos don't wait for Hollywood to discover them. Their fame is self-generated and, in a city of narcissists, hard won. Other characters express their passions in public with such missionary zeal, they make our own bashfulness all the more apparent. Music, environmentalism, and the benefits of shaking your hips drive the street personalities who brighten the schlep of our daily commute. For those about to rock public space, we salute you. By Laurie Pike

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG SEGAL

Guitar Guy

» The éminence grise of boardwalk performers is inline-skate-dancing, electric-guitar-playing HARRY PERRY. Thirty-six years after he first hit the beach, the practicing Sikh is still waiting for his big rock and roll break. Why? "To be a great guitarist you need to play in excess of eight, ten hours a day." Fantasy: For Live Nation to put out his record and book him on tour. "When I was onstage in Wisconsin once and 30,000 people were cheering, I felt the g-force. I *want* that." Peanut gallery: "People in Venice take my picture. In West Hollywood they're more into the music."




the Cause



The Walker

» For 30 years drivers passing the Silver Lake Reservoir have seen a bare-chested pedestrian, face buried in a newspaper, oblivious to all but the fine print before him. Long walks are a routine from childhood that continued after MARC ABRAMS set up a medical practice in the San Fernando Valley. Although he's now retired, he still makes daily 20-mile treks. Why? "I get fresh air, exercise, and sun." Media diet: "I read the *New York Times*, *L.A. Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Daily News*, and *USA Today*. Plus about 20 magazines a month, mostly about history and classical music." Peanut gallery: "Sometimes people say, 'You must walk because you have a heart condition.' If I had a heart condition, I'd be dead."

Hula Hoop Lady

» JEAN HOOPER, whose name coincidentally matches her favorite pastime, isn't shy about her regimen: twirling for up to two hours several days a week outside her condominium on busy Venice Boulevard. If she isn't waving to motorists, it's because she's too caught up in the show tunes playing on her headphones. Hooper brought hula hoops (even the ancient Greeks loved them) into fitness classes at L.A. schools nine years ago, then kept on hooping after she returned to work as a hairstylist. Secret weapon: "I use a Wave Hoop by Maui Toys. It's got water in it. Those Wham-O hoops with air in them? I am not able to do those at all." Peanut gallery: "I get gifts—pieces of fruit, a calendar, a baby hat, a jar of beads. One guy said he just wanted to give me money. I was actually in need of food at the time."

Icons by PETER HOEY





Treeman

» He looks weathered enough that Venice Beach, his haunt, could have developed around him. But LIONEL POWELL has been strutting his eight-foot, six-inch frame (including stilts) for barely more than a year here. Clad in face paint, shrubbery, and pants that resemble moss, he hits the boardwalk in character most afternoons. Powell comes from a mythical place, he tells people, when not high-fiving them, posing for pictures, and dancing. Switching roles: Sometimes Powell changes from his foliage into a white winged costume. Peanut gallery: Tourists have been known to cry out in fright when he emerges from a bush.

Mr. Hollywood

» It's in the blood, says DENNIS WOODRUFF of his V8-fueled showmanship. That Woodruff uses his Crown Victoria to publicize his latest movie production seems a natural offshoot for the self-proclaimed grandson of S.H. Woodruff, cobuilder of the Hollywood sign, who used motor vehicles to advertise his Hollywoodland development. Why? "It evolved out of being a frustrated actor. I don't want to be like Angelyne and spend $10,000 on a billboard. I thought, 'Why don't I use my car to advertise myself?' When that didn't work, I started to write, direct, and produce films that I could star in." Peanut gallery: "I told Quentin Tarantino that I didn't know if my first movie would be any good. He said, 'It doesn't matter. You'll learn from it and make another one.'"



REFLECTIONS OF A VALLEY BOY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER *LESS THAN ZERO*, BRET EASTON ELLIS HAS WRITTEN A SEQUEL THAT FOLLOWS THE TEENS OF HIS BREAKOUT NOVEL INTO MIDDLE AGE. AS *IMPERIAL BEDROOMS* HITS STORES, THE AUTHOR RECONNECTS WITH A FRIEND WHO KNEW HIM BACK IN THE DAY

BY JESSE KATZ | PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHERYL NIELDS





BRET EASTON ELLIS



introduced me to the Polo Lounge in 1984, on a night of howling Santa Anas. We were on winter break from Bennington, the gradeless, testless college in Vermont that had made us both want to become writers. I was the neophyte, an exile from the Pacific Northwest, and Bret was my insider, the privileged Valley Boy, shuttling me around in his mother's cream-colored Mercedes.

To worm our way into a bar as swank as the Beverly Hills Hotel's, Bret insisted on our wearing ties. Bowing to the dress code, it was understood, would be our best defense against getting carded. I was not the type to own one, but Bret, the product of a Sherman Oaks prep school, had a closetful, and so we detoured to his house to get me a loaner, and then wound back down through the canyons, through twisters of dust and fronds, and just as we made our entrance, all duded up, the lights of the Polo Lounge flickered and died. We did our drinking by the glow of emergency candles. The following year, when *Less Than Zero* was published and Bret became the enfant terrible of Gen X lit, the Polo Lounge was right there, dark and decadent, on page 17.

Twenty-five years and five novels later, Bret has written a sequel to his debut, a tortured portrait of power and desperation in middle-aged Hollywood whose title once more channels Elvis Costello: *Imperial Bedrooms*. Due out June 15, with a first printing by Knopf of 100,000, it is *Less Than Zero* on Viagra and Xanax. The aimless teenagers have grown into ambitious adults, more accomplished, better connected, and yet the L.A. they inhabit, a universe Bret documents with unnerving familiarity, is no less vacant or toxic. *Imperial Bedrooms*, I am pleased to report, also features a Polo Lounge scene, a blur of booze and smoke on the patio, in a booth, next to a heat lamp—and so it is on the patio, in a booth, next to a heat lamp that I find myself with Bret again, the years rewinding and fast-forwarding at once.

"This is craaazy," he says. "What are we doing?"

Bret is taller than I remember him, a good six feet, and leaner, the almost cartoonish New Wave cherub of his early dust jackets now a taut and tempered 46-year-old man, his hair a little thinner, a little oranger. He is dressed more for a night at Barney's Beanery—jeans, hoodie, tattered peacoat—than for an old-world watering hole, one that no longer requires neckwear but still requests "business casual" attire. When our server comes, Bret asks her to recite the tequilas. He settles on a Don Julio Blanco. "Can you make that in a margarita, on the rocks, no salt?" he adds. "And a shot on the side? And a glass of ice?"

Whatever weirdness is inherent in practicing journalism on a friend—in toasting while interviewing, catching up while taking notes—the real oddity, as Bret is quick to point out, is that we are engaged in such an antiquated exercise at all. Promoting a novel in the era of Twitter? Profiling an author in the land of TMZ? Printing words on paper to celebrate the printing of yet more words on paper? "That whole notion of publishing as this lofty thing that everyone aspires to—to become famous because of a first novel—it's gone," says Bret, drumming his fingers on the linen tablecloth, itching for a smoke. "It can't happen again. We're in the post-empire. A post-Bret Easton Ellis world."

Bret Easton Ellis, I remind him, is still a pretty formidable brand.

"Go on, write whatever down," he says. "I don't care. Just write the goddamn article now."

IT IS ASTONISHING to think how much time has passed, how a book as brutally desolate as *Less Than Zero* could already be the stuff of nostalgia. (A 25th-anniversary edition was published in May.) Bought for $5,000 and marketed as *Catcher in the Rye* for the MTV age, the story is narrated by Clay, a freshman home for Christ-

SHERYL NIELDS/COPIOUS MANAGEMENT. GROOMING: CAROLA GONZALEZ/CLOUTIER REMIX; CLOTHES: LISA KLINE T-SHIRT, BACO PRIDE HOODIE; LOCATION: SILVERTOP, SILVER LAKE



LESS IS MORE: Ellis at John Lautner's Silvertop house, the main location for the film version of his debut novel

mas from a New England college, and in a series of spare, cinematic haikus, it follows him through a somnambulant haze of sex and drugs and depravity. So deadpan are the depictions that Michiko Kakutani of *The New York Times* famously called it "one of the most disturbing novels I've read in a long time."

Although he has always insisted that his writing is not autobiographical—or at least that parsing his writing for autobiographical clues does it a disservice—Bret happily blends fiction with fact and feels no duty to disentangle the two. His narrators may be gay or straight or neither, at once addled and observant, partakers, messengers, validators, indicters, proof of the author's immorality or amorality or maybe even of his covertly moralistic nature. "A book is a dream," says Bret, whose mother still lives in the family home on Valley Vista, and whose father, a Century City real estate investment analyst, was until his death a source of extravagance and instability. "You're writing the book to figure out why you're writing the book."

Like *Less Than Zero*, with its sly opening line about freeways and merging, *Imperial Bedrooms* begins on a meta note: "They had made a movie about us." Which they had, in 1987, and it was partly Hollywood's sanitization of the material, the sentimentalization of a lost L.A. generation, that led Bret to write *Imperial Bedrooms*. As a sequel, it is not so much an update but a reclaiming. "I was very conscious of the reputation of *Less Than Zero* and how it has been taken away from me basically and reinvented by fans, and how it seems to be emblematic of some kind of rah-rah '80s artifact, like John Hughes movies or Ray-Bans," he says. "I meet so many people who say, 'Oh, you wrote *Less Than Zero*? That's the book that made me want to move to L.A.' And I'm, like, 'Really?' Half its audience misreads it as something very glamorous and alluring and seductive."

Our server drops by again. The storm that had drenched the pink bricks and green awnings that morning has blown through, but the night is crisp, a bristly wind raking the palms, jostling the bougainvilleas. "I just want to make sure you're OK," she says.

"Are you OK?" Bret asks me.

"I'm OK," I say.

"We're the only people out here," Bret says.

"It's OK," our server says. "You can just party it up."

"Can we smoke if there's nobody out here?" Bret asks.

"Yes," she says, "but you didn't hear that from me."

The Marlboro Lights come out, then another $14 glass of Don Julio. The edges are softening, the gaps beginning to fill in. Bret's eyes roll back a fraction under fluttering lids. "I interrupted you," he says. "The brand...the empire..."

My point, I think, was that if the empire has, indeed, imploded—if the machinery that once discovered and promoted and sustained authors has collapsed in the shift to a digital culture—all the more reason for Bret to be pushing [CONTINUED ON PAGE 161]

Getaway LA

HAWAI'I

This summer, head to Hawai'i

By Raha Wright



From secluded beaches to rainforest trails winding through lush tropical foliage, Hawai'i is home to some of the most beautiful spots on Earth. Here are five ways to experience the islands this summer.

Please turn to page **102** for a resource directory including the advertisers in this section.

1 To see a native Hawaiian rainforest at its most pristine, visit the 2,774-acre Kamakou Preserve on Moloka'i. Remarkably, 219 of the preserve's 250 native plant species are found nowhere else in the world. The Nature Conservancy leads monthly hikes through the area and welcomes visitors. **Call (808) 553-5236 or email hike_molokai@tnc.org** for dates and more information.

2 Don't visit Haleakalā National Park just to watch the sunrise. Yes, it's spectacular, especially when seen from the summit—Maui's highest point at over 10,000 feet. But it would be a shame to leave as soon as the sun is up. Instead, dedicate an entire day to the area, hiking through a Mars-like volcanic landscape or searching for nēnē, Hawai'i's endangered state bird. If you're feeling extra adventurous, stay until dark and see more stars than you knew existed. **(808) 572-4400, www.nps.gov/hale**.

3 Want to blend in on the Big Island? Every Wednesday and Saturday dozens of vendors gather at the Hilo Farmers Market, located at the corner of Mamo Street and Kamehameha Avenue, to sell goods ranging from produce to freshly caught fish. Mingle with locals while you sample exotic fruit such as soursop, rambutan, and white pineapple, and also check out crafts by island artists. **(808) 933-1000, www.hilofarmersmarket.com**.

4 If you crave adventure, hike the 11-mile Kalalau Trail. The path traverses Kaua'i's fabled Nāpali Coast, which is home to green valleys and sharp ridgelines and boasts spectacular views of the legendary coast. The hike is no small feat, however: the trail can be narrow and sheer cliffs plunge straight into the ocean. So why do it? Your reward at the end is the picture-perfect Kalalau Beach, which boasts gold sand, a waterfall, and giant sea caves large enough to walk through. Camping permit required; reserve in advance. **(808) 274-3444, www.hawaiistateparks.org**


HULOPO'E BAY

5 For a relaxing day at the beach, visit Hulopo'e Bay on Lāna'i's southern coast. Here, you can explore countless tide pools teeming with marine life, or snorkel in the bay's protected waters. Hulopo'e Beach Park has picnic tables, barbecue grills, and restrooms, making it the perfect spot for a family outing.

PHOTO CREDIT: HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA) / RON GARNETT

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{COMPLIMENTS OF THE CHEF}



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Dine



SOFT-BOILED EGG ON CRISPY RICE WITH BLACK SESAME SAUCE

JESSICA BOONE

[District]

The latest from prolific restaurateur George Abou-Daoud shares a wall and a chef with his casual wine bar, the Mercantile. Kris Morningstar, formerly of Blue Velvet, heads both kitchens, but District goes higher and heavier with its menu. Duck fat Yorkshire puddings inaugurate a meal that might include Aleppo pepper-spiced shrimp and grits, an Asian-tinged soft-boiled egg on crispy rice, and a Black Forest soufflé. Everything's an indulgence, so pack your Lipitor. Retro cocktails cut through the richness. // *6600 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (323-962-8200 or districtonsunset.com). D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. New American* $$$

The List

» EDITED BY LESLEY BARGAR SUTER



REGINETTE DELLA MAMMA FROM OSTERIA MAMMA

JESSICA BOONE

First Look: Osteria Mamma

Pasta lovers mourned last year when Filippo Cortivo and his beloved "Mamma" left their longtime home at Melrose's Osteria La Buca. Now they're back, on the same street no less, with Osteria Mamma, a fast and furious celebration of the humble starch. Loredana "Mamma" Cecchinato makes all the pastas herself, from the musky squid ink fettuccine with *bottarga* to the fat *tagliatelle* lapping up a triple-meat *bolognese*. Mamma's palate might be waning—most sauces could use a hit of salt, and the pizzas are painfully forgettable. Still, the lively spirit in the noisy space, and those blessed noodles, warrant the cult following. // *5732 Melrose Ave., L.A. (323-284-7060 or osteriamamma.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. No alcohol. Italian* **$$$**

DOWNTOWN & MID CITY

BOTTEGA LOUIE ★★
Chef Sam Marvin and his business partner, Daniel Flores, wanted it all—a place that serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, a to-go market, and a *pasta e fagiole* dispensary rolled into one. They pulled it off. Marvin brings Italian standards—from pizza *margherita* to eggplant Parmesan—to life, balancing the requisite generosity with an attention to detail. The clams arrive from the broiler sizzling with bread crumbs and oregano; the purity of a side of *haricots verts* is amped by a hint of garlic. The bright, cavernous room, clad in white tile and marble, feels au courant downtown. » 700 S. Grand Ave. (213-802-1470 or bottegalouie.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Italian **$$**

CHAYA DOWNTOWN ★
Different dishes are featured at each Chaya outpost. The ones here, we would argue, are the freshest yet. *Crudo* preparations include *tai* snapper with kumquat-chili relish and Scottish salmon with pickled fennel. House-cured, ruby red duck prosciutto is paired with shavings of *petit basque* cheese. The flesh of a whole *orata* is rubbed with Tuscan herbs and roasted until flaky. With such a broad menu, not all dishes can be a specialty; pastas are a low point. The Chaya folks have a knack for creating a happy hour scene, and the outdoor patio buzzes come quitting time. » 525 S. Flower St. (213-236-9577 or thechaya.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. Euro-Asian **$$$**

CHURCH & STATE ★
The fries—served with classic *moules marinière*, well-seasoned steaks, or à la carte—are cooked in decadent lard. The crust on the smoky caramelized onion and bacon *tarte* has achieved the ideal balance of crispness and butteriness. The service could be stepped up, but those romantic Edison bulbs overhead cast a forgiving glow on just about everything. » 1850 Industrial St. (213-405-1434 or churchandstatebistro.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sat. Full bar. French Bistro **$$**

CIUDAD ★★
We would come for the *caipirinhas* and live Latin music alone. You can get just as strong a buzz, though, from your plate. It's in the chocolaty smoke of the cayenne-rubbed pork chop, the citrus snap of the Peruvian ceviche, and the flan that makes vanilla seem anything but. With this amalgam of flavors from Spain and Latin America, Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger continue to bring a fiery alternative to downtown dining. » Union Bank Plaza, 445 S. Figueroa St. (213-486-5171 or ciudad-la.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Latin **$$$**

DRAGO CENTRO ★★★
Though Sicilian, Celstino Drago has always had a fascination with a formality not associated with the easy living of the south. What results are dishes that are rigorously composed yet laced with the robust flavors of his native island. The salt cod cake, dense with juicy flakes of fish, is brought into relief with caper berry *gremolata*. The hard durum pastas are startling for their unadorned power. There is something essential about Italy itself in the lightly scored surface of the *garganelli*, dressed with pork sausage and dusted with fennel seeds. Drago's heart may be in Sicily, but Drago Centro is pure Milan. » 525 S. Flower St., Ste. 120 (213-228-8998 or dragocentro.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. Italian **$$$**

LANGER'S DELI
Despite a dicey location across from MacArthur Park, this acclaimed deli thrives on the strength of its corned beef sandwiches. As proof of L.A.'s great ethnic stew, chances are the people eating matzo balls at the next table will be speaking Spanish, Korean, Tagalog, or Japanese. » 704 S. Alvarado St. (213-483-8050 or langersdeli.com). B-L Mon.-Sat. Beer and wine. Deli **$**

LAZY OX CANTEEN ★★★
Together chef Jose Centeno (Opus, Aubergine, Lot 1) and partner Michael Cardenas (IDG) have come up with a "canteen" that feels completely of the moment. A wooden yolk, a wall sculpture of a reclining ox, singed wood paneling—the atmosphere is as spare as any Japanese watering hole on nearby 1st Street. Though the food has an "ethnic" tinge, it's not pegged to a particular country, hopping from Moroccan-style beef jerky to *pasilla* soup to braised *paleron*. But it's clear that meat is Centeno's muse. Steak, trotters, and cheeks are all covered. The spot's popularity is also one of its challenges. The kitchen is too hectic to allow the chef the time he needs for certain dishes, which can lead to a mushy cauliflower gratin and a curdled sabayon. The wine list holds some plummy delights but it's the beer that catches interest. » 241 S. San Pedro St. (212-626-5299 or lazyoxcanteen.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Small Plates **$$**

MO-CHICA ★★
A food counter tucked in the Mercado La Paloma, Mo-Chica is Ricardo Zarate's first restaurant. A longtime sushi chef, he deploys the clarity of the Japanese aesthetic to capture the simmered soulfulness of traditional Peruvian food. His quinoa preparations—a fresh salad and a risotto—are stellar, and the sautéed beef, which he stokes with a fiery sauce and tops with thinly sliced onions, is remarkable for its ability to be hearty while keeping flavors distinct. Still, nothing on the menu can match the ceviche. A compression of Peru's multilayered cultures—Inca with a dash of Nisei—it is the city's definitive incarnation. » 3655 S. Grand Ave. (213-747-2141 or mo-chica.com). L-D Mon.-Sat. No alcohol. Peruvian **$**

NICKEL DINER
This may forever be known as the place that brought the bacon doughnut to L.A. It's not surprising that the pastry chef has worked with Thomas Keller, but what makes this newfangled downtown diner even more special is the cumbersome-yet-juicy burger, the spicy barbecued pork hash, the selection of old-timey soda pops, the crispy-edged buttermilk pancakes, and the painted sign that boasts "this is the place." » 524 S. Main St. (213-623-8301 or 5cdiner.com). B-L Tue.-Sun.; D Tue.-Sat. No alcohol. Diner **$**

PATINA ★
You can't beat the setting—tucked into a corner of the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall—and

it's a rare quiet dining room in the city's decibel-busting restaurant scene. The wine and cheese presentations can be a wonder to behold, and the overall service is among the best in L.A. The only thing disappointing about today's Patina is the food, which comes courtesy of the latest executive chef, Tony Esnault. Dishes like Colorado rack of lamb with *piquillo* peppers and quinoa sound promising, but the preparation falters. The vegetable mosaic is a funky assortment of mushy vegetables. The black truffle shavings baked under the skin of the *jidori* chicken are a lovely touch, and the seafood dishes are where Esnault shines. » 141 S. Grand Ave. (213-972-3331 or patinagroup.com). D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. Cal-French $$$$

RIVERA ★★★★
John Sedlar has been roaming the borderlands between worlds for years, and Rivera is his most brilliant articulation yet, embodying a passionate dialogue between the Americas and Spain. Just as in Mexico, the *chile pasilla* is served chilled, but the filling of *burrata* contributes an unexpected lushness. The *baba cachaça* dessert, bolstered with citrus slices and Brazilian sugercane brandy and finished with chantilly cream, combines the exactitude of a Parisian patisserie and the abandon of a Rio bar. » 1050 S. Flower St. (213-749-1460 or riverarestaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Nueva Mexicana $$$

URBAN NOODLE NEW
Contempo-casual Asian cafés are the mode downtown, but the noodles here are particularly springy. Slurp the strands from a curry-laced soup with fish balls and bean sprouts or pluck them stir fried from bowls of snow peas and bok choy. Bookend either entrée with a starter of crisp strips of pickled napa cabbage and a bowl of black sesame ice cream from Milk for dessert. » 118 W. 4th St. (213-626-0662 or urbannoodlela.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Beer and wine. Noodle House $

WATER GRILL ★★★
Pre-theatergoers and post-boardroom suits flock here for seafood dishes accompanied by the likes of cumin-flavored spaetzle and candied tangerines. As adventurous as chef David LeFevre's presentations can be, the milder fish, such as barramundi and cobia, are never overpowered. Despite the warm woods and deco accents, the setting at times can feel corporate, but the raw bar, which has a half-dozen types of oysters in its broad selection, is rowdy come happy hour. » 544 S. Grand Ave. (213-891-0900 or watergrill.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Seafood $$

LOS FELIZ & SILVER LAKE

BARBRIX ★★
With a big-beamed ceiling and stacked wine cases by the bar, Barbrix is studious about seeming unstudied. Executive chef Don Dickman takes in the whole Mediterranean, pairing homemade cider mustard with Spanish sausages, lending a jolt to lamb chops with Moroccan spice rub, and countering *treviso*'s pleasant bitterness with ripe avocado in a delicate salad. Nothing is overstated; it's gourmet without letting on and just the thing for the bohemian terrain. Crispy polenta with sautéed oyster mushrooms and a creamy Gorgonzola *fonduta* might be the best $7 you ever spend. » 2442 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake (323-662-2442 or barbrix.com). D nightly. Beer and wine. Wine Bar $

BLAIR'S ★★
On a quiet stretch in Silver Lake, Blair's fills candlelit tables and casual bar stools with regulars and first dates. They gather for sweet potato gnocchi with wild mushrooms, pan-roasted halibut with Spanish chorizo, and what could be the best short ribs in town. Doughnuts may be de rigueur on menus these days, but how many of them are made with Belgian Abbey ale and then dunked in toffee sauce? » 2903 Rowena Ave., Silver Lake (323-660-1882 or blairsrestaurant.com). B-L-D daily. California $$$

CANELÉ ★
Chef Corina Weibel worked at Campanile and Lucques before opening her own restaurant, and you can see it in her dishes. A whole roasted *branzino* looks up from your plate alongside a bowl of fingerling potatoes, olives, and caper berries. The beef bourguignonne on a bed of eggy noodles is rich and fundamental. A buttermilk biscuit topped with crème fraîche is filled with poached pears one day, figs the next. A token of thanks—a fresh-baked *canelé*, natch, at the door—sends customers on their way. » 3219 Glendale Blvd., Atwater Village (323-666-7133 or canele-la.com). D Tue.-Sun.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Beer and wine. New Mediterranean $$

LAMILL ★
From the siphon java experiments to the unbeatable scone, this "coffee boutique" is no mere corner café. Providence chef Michael Cimarusti is behind the clever *panini*. Espresso drinks like the "coffee and a jelly donut" are cute. Come for a science experiment: a siphoned cup of joe made in a beaker. » 1636 Silver Lake Blvd., Silver Lake (323-663-4441 or lamillcoffee.com). B-L Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. Café $$

LITTLE DOM'S ★
At this spin-off of West Hollywood fixture Dominick's, Los Feliz locals come for high-end basics with a mix of northern Italian and California influences. A plate of roasted beets and *burrata* is bright but not transcendent. Meyer lemon pesto gives a nice edge to tuna *crudo*. A generous portion of grilled blue bass arrives with *cavolo nero* and baby yams. » 2128 Hillhurst Ave., Los Feliz (323-661-0055). B-L Sun.-Mon.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Italian $$

HOLLYWOOD & MELROSE

AGO ★
Perfectly cooked pastas come piping hot at this sleek showcase (co-owned by Robert De Niro), and pizzas come directly from a brick oven. Entrées include the likes of monkfish with creamy polenta and baby rack of lamb. » 8478 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6333). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Tuscan $$$


LA OPERA


Das Rheingold


THE GETTY VILLA


Die Walküre

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CINEMA
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
American Cinematheque (Egyptian Theatre)
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
Goethe-Institut Los Angeles
Hammer Museum
LACMA
LA Film Festival
The Opera League of Los Angeles
Sundance Institute

CONVERSATIONS AND SYMPOSIA
American Jewish University
Beverly Hills Public Library
Brand Library & Art Center
Burbank Public Library
c3: Center for Conscious Creativity
Claremont Public Library
Crowell Public Library
Goethe-Institut Los Angeles
Hammer Museum
The Huntington Library
Istituto Italiano di Cultura
J. Paul Getty Museum
LACMA
The Latino Museum of History, Art, and Culture
La Verne Library
Library Foundation of Los Angeles: ALOUD
Mount St. Mary's College
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA)
The Museum of Tolerance
Norton Simon Museum
Occidental College
Oxnard Public Library
Pasadena Public Library
Platt Library
Porter Ranch Library
REDCAT (Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater)
Redondo Beach Library
Robert V. Fullerton Art Museum at CSUSB
Santa Monica Public Library
UCLA
UCLA Department of Comparative Literature
University of La Verne
USC Brain and Creativity Institute
USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
USC Thornton School of Music
USC Visions and Voices
Wagner Society of Southern California

ECLECTICA
California African American Museum
Descanso Gardens
Friends Of The Observatory
Griffith Observatory
Los Angeles Conservancy
Los Angeles Times Festival of Books
Machine Project LA
USC – Max Kade Institute
Villa Aurora

EDUCATIONAL
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
The HeArt Project
Los Angeles Education Partnership
Robert V. Fullerton Art Museum at CSUSB
Santa Monica Museum of Art

HOSPITALITY
Let's Be Frank
The Opera League of Los Angeles
Patina Restaurant Group

PERFORMING ARTS
The Colburn School
Congregation Kol Ami
Cool Street Music
County of Los Angeles Public Library
Eli and Edythe Broad Stage
Goethe-Institut/USC – Max Kade Institute
Grand Performances/daKAH Hip Hop Orchestra
Greek Theatre/Nederlander
Hispanics for LA Opera
Highways / collision/theory
JACARANDA: music at the edge
KUSC Classical FM 91.5
LA Opera
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Los Angeles Pierce Symphonic Winds
Los Angeles Public Library
Lyric Opera of Los Angeles
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA)
Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)
Music Center/Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County
Musical Theatre Guild
Operetta Foundation
Robert V. Fullerton Art Museum at CSUSB
Sundays Live
Symphony in the Glen
UCLA
USC Thornton School of Music
The Verdi Chorus
Villa Aurora
Young Musicians Foundation

THEATRE
Center Theatre Group
Geffen Playhouse
The MET Theatre/USC - Max Kade Institute

VISUAL ARTS
18th Street Arts Center/ Clayton Campbell
ACE Gallery
Autry National Center
California Art Club
H. Studio
Highways/Michael Manning
Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens
J. Paul Getty Museum
LACMA
The Latino Museum of History, Art, and Culture
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA)
Norton Simon Museum
Robert V. Fullerton Art Museum at CSUSB
Ruth Bachofner Gallery

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KUSC Classical FM 91.5
Los Angeles County Arts Commission
LA Inc.
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Siegfried


WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL


Götterdämmerung


All Ring photos: Monika Rittershaus

LACMA


ANIMAL ★
On their Food Network show *2 Dudes Catering*, Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo were known for their bold cooking and long locks. The loud style is in full effect at their restaurant on Fairfax. The menu changes daily and the wine list weekly. Our meals included fried quail with grits, mahimahi with favas, and amberjack poke with *harissa*. Everything hit the mark, but nothing wowed. (Not to blaspheme, but is there such a thing as too much bacon?) Still, we're confident that with these two, we'll see our share of triumphant dishes. » 435 N. Fairfax Ave. (323-782-9225 or animalrestaurant.com). D nightly. Beer and wine. New American **$$**

BASTIDE ★
We're hesitant to become attached to this more casual bistro interpretation of Joe Pytka's Bastide, what with all the chef shuffles over the years. The latest, Joseph Mahon, is not always successful in balancing his ambition with the restaurant's new nonchalance. A special pork chop dressed with black truffle sauce was massive but overcooked. A fillet of salmon is luscious but begs for a granule or two of salt. Set off by the zing of preserved lemon, a giant braised lamb shank isn't just rustic—it's caveman worthy. What hasn't changed? The wine list, which is as thrilling and daunting as ever. » 8475 Melrose Pl. (323-651-5950 or bastidela.com). L-D Tue.-Sat. Full bar. Cal-French **$$$**

CAMPANILE ★★★
Close to two decades in, Campanile endures—innovative, yet thanks to founding chef Mark Peel, true to its roots. His flavors are hefty: Duck, salmon, and prime rib are grilled on wood planks, crusted with tapenade, or braised with mushrooms; mussels are tossed with hot chorizo. The bread, from La Brea Bakery next door, is a feat; Nancy Silverton's pastry legacy lives on in dessert. Campanile's charm lies in its consistency, something of a luxury in this town. » 624 S. La Brea Ave. (323-938-1447 or campanile restaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean **$$$**

COMME ÇA ★★
David Myers, who is also the chef-owner Costa Mesa's Pizzeria Ortica, explores traditional brasserie food here with his characteristic eye for detail. The goat cheese is rolled in pistachios, giving a pert beetroot salad a sprightly touch; marrowbones are accompanied by a lusty oxtail jam. With white banquettes and a heat-seeking crowd nibbling on *moules frites*, the mood can be giddy, the ambience loud, but the food carries weight. » 8479 Melrose Ave. (323-782-1104 or commecarestaurant.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Brasserie **$$$**

DELPHINE ★
A Côte D'Azur theme is expressed via a breezy menu that features gleaming towers of oysters, silver cones of piping-hot *frites*, fresh Francophile salads, a traditional *croque monsieur*, sizzling steak au poivre, and a hefty macaroni gratin. Everything looks, tastes, and feels effortless except the service, which can be all over the place. The small list of rotating nightly specials has us planning return trips on Friday for bouillabaisse served in a cast-iron pot and on Sunday for cassoulet. » W Hotel, 6250 Hollywood Blvd. (323-798-1355 or restaurantdelphine.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Brasserie **$$$**

THE FOUNDRY ON MELROSE ★★
Chef Eric Greenspan holds together his festive establishment—part restaurant, part social hall, and on weekends, part jazz club—with centrifugal force. The patio features an olive tree and a glass-fronted fireplace, and the menu pings around New American bistro cooking: soft-shell crab, sweetbreads, rabbit potpie, and pork belly. The atmosphere is buoyant and the kitchen uncompromising. A salad of radishes with tangerines has a springlike zest; crispy skate is gilded with saffron. The poached chicken with morel mushrooms and white corn can upstage the rock soundtrack. » 7465 Melrose Ave. (323-651-0915 or thefoundryon melrose.com). D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. California **$$$**

HATFIELD'S ★★★★
Quinn and Karen Hatfield have traded their cubbyhole on Beverly for a giant space on Melrose. The light is so soft and the palette so subdued that, together with the attentive service, the restaurant is an invitation to savor the moment. The new menu sparkles with originality. Whether it's the velvety groats in the wild mushroom cannelloni or the potato gratin that sweetens the Tasmanian trout, Quinn's dishes are entirely individual. Karen's desserts are those of a classicist—lemon cream pie, brioche bread pudding—but a meticulousness is apparent. Sommelier Peter Birmingham has created a great complementary list that ranges around the wine world. » 6703 Melrose Ave. (323-935-2977 or hatfieldsrestaurant.com) L Mon.-Fri.; D Nightly. California **$$$**

THE HUNGRY CAT ★
Chef David Lentz's seafood spot has all the farmers' market ideals, cooking chops, and playful experimentation of his co-owner/wife's restaurant, Lucques—without the tablecloths. House-made chorizo with clams and fresh shell beans belongs at a beach bonfire. Seared black cod with green papaya and coconut rice finds the savory side of tropical. The bar formulates cocktails that are at once a throwback and fresh. » 1535 Vine St. (323-462-2155 or thehungrycat.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Seafood **$$**

LOTERÍA GRILL ★★
With Lotería's clean lines, red-aproned crew, and brilliant white kitchen, chef-owner Jimmy Shaw is broadening the definition of a Mexican restaurant while sharpening the emotional pull of the food. Most dishes highlight the contrast of patient simmering and fresh salsas. The stewed chicken of the *tinga de pollo*, the tender *carne deshebrada*, the slow-cooked pork of the *cochinita pibil*—all have a lush, saturated quality. There are a few details that need work (the flan is lackluster), but this fits right in among our all-time favorite Mexican spots. » 6627 Hollywood Blvd. (323-465-2500 or loteriagrill.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Also at Farmers Market, 6333 W. 3rd St. (323-930-2211). Mexican **$$**

DO GOOD, EAT BETTER

» From May 30 to June 5, branches of RA Sushi will donate proceeds from select dishes to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

LOU
When an honest place offering simple food at reasonable prices sets up shop in a seedy strip mall, everyone joins in the sense of discovery. Lou Amdur's tiny restaurant is often packed, serving up slow food (the cooking style, not the delivery) like Pig Candy—bacon cured with brown sugar and spiked with pepper—and a nightly entrée that might be braised pork shoulder or coq au vin. The menu's small and includes frisée salads, cheese and salami "planks," and more than two dozen small-batch wines by the glass. The root beer float is a fitting dessert. » 724 Vine St. (323-962-6369 or louonvine.com). L–D Mon.–Sat. Beer and wine. Wine Bar/Bistro **$$**

LUCQUES ★★★★
Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne's restaurant has the snap of the new and the ease of the classical. Their converted carriage house is all masonry and wood, with a freestanding fireplace and bow-truss ceilings. The wine list drawn up by Styne is spot-on, with exquisite Madeiras and burgundies. Goin's cooking, Mediterranean in inspiration, flirts with the traditional repertoire. A deglazed shot of honey vinegar sharpens the appetizer of sweetbreads with dates; rice soubise cut with whole-grain mustard ratchets the steamed striped bass from good to great. The *panna cotta* is made complete with a star burst of blood orange granita. The restaurant is gracious, timeless, and dare we say it, grand. » 8474 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6277 or lucques.com). L Tue.–Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. French-Mediterranean **$$$**

THE MERCANTILE ★
Under chef Kris Morningstar (Blue Velvet), this gourmet market and café serves international comfort dishes such as French onion soup, a gooey Cuban sandwich, and a slow-poached tuna noodle casserole. The focus is on homemade: A different sausage is created each day, and the trout rillette is house smoked. A standout selection of condiments and spices lines the shelves, and a deli case offers goodies for takeout. Ice cream flavors like caramel corn are reason enough to come. » 6600 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (323-962-8202 or themercantilela.com). L–D daily. Beer and wine. French-American **$**

MUSSO & FRANK GRILL
The oldest restaurant in Hollywood remains a dark, imposing landmark serving flannel cakes in the morning, short ribs at night, and the martini against which all others must be judged. The waiters are gruff, experienced, and perfect. Pure Raymond Chandler. » 6667 Hollywood Blvd. (323-467-7788). B–L–D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Continental **$$$**

NISHIMURA ★★
Hiro Nishimura is a sushi chef with groupies. Several years ago they followed him to a garden cottage without a sign across from the Pacific Design Center. The spare white interior does not distract. From the periwinkles served in a tiny hand-cast cup to the live scallop sashimi that Nishimura slaps into submission to the Alaskan crab sushi that is broiled to order, the cooking has a pointillistic precision and an undeniable power. » 8684 Melrose Ave. (310-659-4770). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese **$$$$**

OSTERIA MOZZA/PIZZERIA MOZZA ★★★
The *osteria* is all dark hues, and its sommeliers wear Windsor ties; the adjoining pizzeria is bright and relaxed, with cooks behind the counter forming delectable pies. The restaurants are linked by the shared philosophy of Nancy Silverton and Mario Batali, the double threat behind this always crowded venture. Flavors build in increments toward full-throated generosity: Lemon zest and hazelnuts ramp up the power of the sheep's milk ricotta at the osteria's mozzarella bar; radicchio and escarole magnify the meaty tones of the *guanciale* on one of the popular pizzas. » Osteria: 6602 Melrose Ave. (323-297-0100 or mozza-la.com). D nightly. Full bar. Pizzeria: 641 N. Highland Ave. (323-297-0101 or mozza-la.com). L–D daily. Beer and wine. Italian **$$$**

PROVIDENCE ★★★★
Even more than elegant, this restaurant is real. The waiters are dressed in updated grill-room smocks, the walls are the color of wet sand, and co-owner and maitre d' Donato Poto rushes across the dining room with a live octopus on a plate. Michael Cimarusti's cooking extracts every nuance from the sea. Spot prawns arrive freshly broiled, their flavor heightened by toasted rosemary; a smidge of jalapeño-soy gelée drapes the *kanpachi*, lending a piquant contrast; a haunch of roasted turbot is carved at table. Adrian Vasquez's desserts mirror the adroitness of Cimarusti's cooking—a homemade "lollipop" that bursts

The Dining Guide

» **THESE LISTINGS** are a guide to establishments reviewed and recommended by our dining critics and staff and have no relationship to any advertising in **Los Angeles** magazine. Visits are anonymous, and all expenses are paid by the magazine.

» **PRICE CLASSIFICATIONS** are approximate and are based on a typical three-course dinner for one person, exclusive of drinks, tax, and tip; unless otherwise noted, these restaurants accept most credit cards.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

★★★★ Remarkable and extraordinary
★★★ Bold and ambitious
★★ Distinctive and assured
★ Pleasant and satisfying

$ INEXPENSIVE » Meals under $15
$$ MODERATE » Mostly under $25
$$$ EXPENSIVE » Mostly under $50
$$$$ VERY EXPENSIVE » $50 and over

B: Breakfast **L:** Lunch **D:** Dinner

First Taste: An early look at a new restaurant. Further review is required before rating.

» **WE WELCOME** your comments and suggestions. Please write c/o "Dine," *Los Angeles* magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036; or e-mail us at letters@lamag.com.


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Peak Season

(GLOBE ARTICHOKES)

Don't be intimidated by their armor of thorny leaves—globe artichokes are actually flowers, and their fleshy hearts are sweetest this time of year. Slice off the top inch of the bud and snip the tips of any remaining sharp leaves. The artichokes can be boiled whole or quartered for sautéing and braising. "I like to take the hearts and sauté them in a little garlic and butter or olive oil," says **Kerry Clasby**, forager for Santa Monica's FIG Restaurant. Look for artichokes with green or purple inner leaves that are tightly packed. The heavier the blossom, the denser the heart. // MICHAEL LIMBO

with blood orange juice offers just the right punctuation. » 5955 Melrose Ave. (323-460-4170 or providencela.com). L Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Seafood **$$$$**

XIOMARA MELROSE ★★
The barman fashions one of the best *mojitos* in L.A. Xiomara Ardolina's restaurant conveys old Havana: Rugs are scattered with nonchalance; the walls sport pictures of the city. *Bacalaitos*, salt cod fritters, are a nod to Cuba's Basque and Gallego cultures; *ropa vieja*, shredded duck served over *manchego*-spiked polenta, pairs Italy and Spain; the fried rice with dried shrimp, ham, and ripe plantains illuminates the Chinese-Cuban cooking. » 6101 Melrose Ave. (323-461-0601 or xiomararestaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Latin **$$$**

LA CIENEGA & WEST HOLLYWOOD

ANGELINI OSTERIA ★★★
This minimalist spot mocks the stereotype of Angelenos as health-obsessed weenies. Gino Angelini, a native of Italy, embraces the honesty of the Italian table with his deceptively simple cooking. His sensibility for the sea is apparent in the breaded and broiled scallops, but he makes fine veal kidneys, too. Nothing here, however, moves as fast as the green lasagna. » 7313 Beverly Blvd. (323-297-0070 or angeliniosteria.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. Italian **$$$**

A.O.C. ★★
In the place that helped usher in L.A.'s small-plates craze, the lighting is soft, the ceiling high, and the mood merry. Some prefer to sit at the wine bar; others opt for the charcuterie counter, where cooks slice all sorts of artisanal goodies. Suzanne Goin's gift is as evident here as it is at Lucques. A salad of escarole, radicchio, anchovies, and mustard dressing packs a delicious punch; the salt cod gratin has the intensity of that which is superlative. » 8022 W. 3rd St. (323-653-6359 or aocwinebar.com). D nightly. Beer and wine. Small Plates **$$**

THE BAZAAR BY JOSÉ ANDRÉS ★★★
Nightlife company SBE has partnered with Spanish celebrity chef José Andrés. The avant-garde design by Philippe Starck divides the space into two arenas—Blanca and Rojo—but you can order from either menu regardless of where you sit. Blanca serves molecular gastronomy-influenced "modern tapas" that are better the less they try to mimic Spanish classics. Ottoman carrot fritters with pistachio sauce are plump marvels, but the *tortilla de patatas* "new way" is reduced to foam in a glass. The menu of standards at Rojo is exquisite. The *ensaladilla rusa* boasts an airy mayonnaise that is able to support potato cubes, peas, and oil-packed tuna belly. For dessert we recommend the flan, the smoothness of the custard juxtaposed with the bite of the caramel. » SLS Hotel, 465 S. La Cienega Blvd. (310-246-5555 or slshotels.com). D nightly. Full bar. Tapas **$$$**

BISTRO LQ ★★★
Laurent Quenioux's wide-ranging menu twines together elements from deepest France and multiculti Los Angeles. The daring chef sees connections where few others do, finding in the nutty undertones of *masa* the counterpoint for the richness of a braised boar. There are mind-blowingly labor-intensive dishes like the *côte de boeuf*—for an accent, he slow poaches oxtails, picks them clean, and slips the morsels into envelopes of phyllo dough—as well as petite creations of utter perfection, like the eggs poached in red wine and served under spoonfuls of mushrooms and bacon. » 8009 Beverly Blvd. (323-951-1088 or bistrolq.com). D Tue.-Sat. Beer and wine. Modern French **$$$**

BLD ★
Neal Fraser and the team at Grace have a concrete-casual operation just up the street. Like the name says, it serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The brioche French toast is dry and fluffy. There are loads of sandwiches (braised pork, short rib) and salads (albacore, hanger steak). Service is sometimes slapdash—or Freddy Krueger is cutting up the broiled grapefruits in back. » 7450 Beverly Blvd. (323-930-9744 or bldrestaurant.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. American **$-$$**

BLT STEAK ★★
A meal at New York chef Laurent Tourondel's first L.A. venture begins with a small jar of warm chicken liver served with slices of *pain rustique*, followed by softball-size Emmenthal popovers (with the recipe attached). Mains arrive à la carte, and steaks range from a monster porterhouse for two to a ten-ounce *wagyu* top cap. Dover sole *meunière*—which fills the plate—is the seafood star. » 8720 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-360-1950 or bltsteak.com). D nightly. Full bar. Steak House **$$$$**

CECCONI'S ★
The former Mortons has been transformed to mimic the original Cecconi's in London. Aston Martins are parked out front, and air kissing abounds on the patio. In the kitchen is Andrea Cavaliere, and he demonstrates how a talented chef can lend personality to even the most well-established protocols. Crisp asparagus spears give zing to creamy *burrata*, and the grilled octopus is assertively charred. Plenty of pristine tartares are on the menu, too, but the lack of stews and braised dishes adds up. The technique is there; the robust earthiness that serves as a cornerstone of the Italian table is not. » 8764 Melrose Ave. (310-432-2000 or cecconiswesthollywood.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Italian **$$**

EVA RESTAURANT ★★
Rustic paneling mingles with white linens and kitchen views to create a compact stage for Mark Gold. Having worked for Joachim Splichal's Patina Restaurant Group and for Joe Miller in Venice, Gold learned the importance of focus and pacing. He doesn't fuss. His brand of American bistro fare mines ethnic richness in dishes such as a lively "linguini" with clams that features *soba* noodles, and boiled beef with buttery cauliflower puree that could make a St. Louis hausfrau proud. The family-style $35 Sunday suppers might include chicken *tagine*, braised brisket, romaine salad crowned with hand-torn croutons, and limitless pours. That'll bring the neighbors every time. » 7458 Beverly Blvd. (323-634-0700 or evarestaurantla.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. California **$$**

XIV ★★
The room still screams Philippe Starck, with its haute-whimsical clash of styles and eras, but Michael Mina has simplified his menu, switching from a byzantine system

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of small plates to the standard appetizers-and-entrées arrangement. The Mad Hatter element in ordering remains, though, with small versions of the entrées offered in 8-, 11-, or 14-course tasting menus and vegetarian interpretations of the meat dishes available on request. Highlights include a beet salad with *burrata* and wild arugula, moist Alaskan halibut with peas and morels, scallop tempura, *jidori* chicken with favas, and a foamy asparagus-and-squash blossom risotto. » 8117 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-656-1414 or xivla.com). D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. California $$$$

GRACE ★★
Neal Fraser birthed the first *gastrique* on Beverly Boulevard, sourcing and sautéing there long before it became a restaurant row. His establishment is mature in every way. The decor is West Elm on a fabulous budget. Curved mirrors reflect the room and the nook of a bar. Fraser's cooking crystallizes around themes like local ingredients and game. A dish of McFarland Farms pheasant with bacon molasses, Anson Mills polenta, and a brandy-orange reduction hits the spot between the old and the new. Dessert doughnuts are a must. » 7360 Beverly Blvd. (323-934-4400 or gracerestaurant.com). D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. New American $$$

THE IVY ★
The beauty of the Ivy is that it never changes. The kitchen knows exactly what it's doing; the guests know exactly what they're ordering—probably the chopped salad at lunch, probably the fried chicken at dinner—and everyone knows exactly how it will taste: pretty darn good. With the decisions made, diners are free to periscope around the patio and enjoy the Ivy as the celebrity magnet that it is. » 113 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-274-8303). L-D daily; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. American $$$

JAR ★★
On the one hand, this is a chophouse, and Suzanne Tracht's pot roast and Brobdingnagian bone-in pork loin are duly heralded. The small dishes, however, are what elevates Jar: deviled eggs crowned with chunks of crabmeat; tender calamari salad with a citrusy dressing set off by a chiffonade of mint. The room may be the most handsome—and comfortable—in the city. Brunch is outstanding, from the sticky buns to the pot roast hash. » 8225 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-6566 or thejar.com). D nightly; brunch Sun. Full bar. Steak House $$$

MADEO RISTORANTE ★★
Don't come here for intellectually deconstructed concepts. Come here for excellent traditional Italian food: *mare caldo, spaghetti alla bottarga, linguine vongole, branzino al forno.* What sets Madeo apart is the conspiratorial atmosphere; it's sort of an underground Ivy, where a cooler class of celebrity enjoys the retro vibe. » 8897 Beverly Blvd. (310-859-4903). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Tuscan $$$

MATSUHISA ★★
Now that an entire generation has been weaned on Matsuhisa's spicy brand of sushi, the restaurant has regained its reputation as a serious spot. The chefs wait to see whether you're one more newbie who's come for signature preparations like the *toro* with caviar or the *uni* shooter with bonito broth. Prove to them that you appreciate raw fish in all its translucent variety, and you can enjoy a beautifully crafted meal. » 129 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-9639 or nobumatsuhisa.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$$

NOBU ★★
At Nobu Matsuhisa's glitzier enterprises, ceviche is a spicy mélange of shrimp and fish marinated in lemon juice and rice vinegar; the *tiradito* is flower shaped; and the sushi and sashimi are standard-bearers. For dessert, try broiled plums with a meringue puff and ginger ice cream. » 129 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-9639). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Also at Malibu Country Mart, 3835 Cross Creek Rd., Malibu (310-317-9140 or nobumatsuhisa.com). D nightly. Full bar. Japanese $$$

ORTOLAN ★★
The two currents in chef Christophe Émé's vernacular are reflected in his dining rooms: One is decked out with white banquettes, and the other could fit in a farmhouse. His credentials include Taillevent in Paris and L.A.'s L'Orangerie. While his cooking bears the mark of an exact haute manner, it is tempered by a joyful irreverence (your *amuse-bouche* might come in a test tube) and a rustic spirit (he will serve lobster in a Le Creuset pot or accent pork belly with truffles). His foie gras terrine is definitive. » 8338 W. 3rd St. (323-653-3300 or ortolanrestaurant.com). D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. French $$$$


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MAIN INGREDIENTS

(Chef Sascha Lyon's Le Grand Delphine)

DELPHINE // 6250 HOLLYWOOD BLVD. // 323-798-1355 // RESTAURANTDELPHINE.COM



CEVICHE
» "It's not really a ceviche—it's mussels, clams, squid, and shrimp tossed with bell peppers, jalapeños, and red onion."

JONAH CRAB CLAWS
» "Our suppliers cook them and score them so you can crack them open by hand."

STEAMED SHELLFISH
» "We cook shrimp, mussels, Dungeness crab, razor clams, periwinkles, and whelks in a broth of white wine, salt, lemon, and aromatics."

LOBSTER AND PRAWNS
» "A traditional seafood plateau should be awe inspiring. We leave the heads on the prawns and steam a whole Maine lobster live."

OYSTERS AND CLAMS
» "Malpeque oysters are a good, crisp variety from very cold waters off Prince Edward Island. They have a bright and briny flavor. Littleneck clams are small and the best for raw eating."

JESSICA BOONE

PETROSSIAN ★★
The latest version of Petrossian is caviar without the guilt. Yes, you can open a 500-gram tin of osetra, but you can also order a 12-gram serving of domestic, farm-raised caviar with all the fixings at $24. The young French chef Benjamin Bailly has served alongside Alain Ducasse and Joël Robuchon, and his pedigreed training is evident in soups like the the cold borscht with a dab of sour cream and a swirl of balsamic. Service is understated, exactly what it should be in a restaurant that offers $750 servings of caviar but doesn't want to scare off the everyday customer. » 321 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-271-0576 or petrossian.com). L Mon.-Sun.; D Mon.-Sat.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Beer and wine. Caviar **$$-$$$$**

SIMON L.A. ★★
Just past Rande Gerber's Stone Rose Lounge at the Sofitel Hotel is chef Kerry Simon's relaxed restaurant. His cooking is guided by an intelligent hominess. The salads are lively, the pizzas wood fired. Roasted chicken breast gets its crispness from being weighed down in a pan with a brick; braised short ribs come with a stack of sweet potato pancakes. Desserts, from PB&J sandwiches to wisps of cotton candy, are playful. » Sofitel, 8555 Beverly Blvd. (310-278-5444 or sofitella.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California **$$$**

BEVERLY HILLS

THE BELVEDERE
From the stately dining room to the vanilla malteds, this restaurant is classic. A Kansas City strip comes with truffled *pommes frites*. Crispy barramundi represents the kitchen's contemporary bent, mac and cheese its appreciation for comfort foods. The Peninsula hotel's casual Roof Garden offers spa cuisine at breakfast and lunch. » Peninsula Beverly Hills, 9882 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-975-2736 or beverlyhillspeninsula.com). L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. American **$$$$**

THE BLVD ★
There's no better spot for lunch if you like a room bustling with well-to-do shoppers, sophisticated out-of-towners, and Westside socialites of a certain age. The decor is luxe deco and the menu bright: steak au poivre salad, *croque monsieur* with *jamón ibérico*. Dinner's lovely, too, with the likes of smoked Balik salmon, lobster two ways with pea risotto, and the rich Bling burger—made with Kobe beef and Humboldt Fog. » Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd. (310-385-3901 or fourseasons.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Contemporary American **$$$**

BOUCHON ★★★
Thomas Keller's Beverly Hills outpost (he has Bouchons in Vegas and Yountville, too) sits in the new Montage Hotel, but its brasserie look is so achieved that you are practically beamed to Paris. Keller, known for his precision, seems liberated by the brasserie style, and in *chef de cuisine* Rory Herrmann he has found a kindred spirit. The food is forthright without sacrificing elegance. The *boudin noir* plays the sweetness of caramelized apples against the airiness of pureed potatoes and the earthiness of plump blood sausage. *Gnocchi à la Parisienne* are flawlessly pan seared. The short ribs are tender, and the homey sauce as considered as a well-turned epigram. The downstairs bar is a cocktail and wine destination with its own menu of light nibbles such as oysters on the half shell and escargots capped with puff pastry. » 235 N. Canon Dr. (310-271-9910 or bouchonbistro.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Brasserie **$$$**

CULINA, MODERN ITALIAN
It's a challenge to do anything new with Italian food in this town, and we give Culina credit for trying. Umbrian olive oil is poured with the bread, and cocktails sporting savory herbs wink at the mother country. To start, choose between cheese and charcuterie, crudo dishes including yellowtail with star anise oil, and antipasti like the crispy *arancini*. Pastas such as the fluffy gnocchi with lobster knuckles and springy pea shoots shine. Heartier but remarkably light is the superb pounded and breaded veal chop paired with peppery arugula, sweet tomatoes, and Parmesan. The only things hotter than the fire pits on the patio are the A-listers dining next to them. » Four Seasons Hotel, 300 S. Doheny Dr. (310-860-4000 or culinarestaurant.com). B-L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly; brunch Sun. Full bar. Italian **$$$**

CUT ★★★
Wolfgang Puck's steak house on steroids is a two-tiered expanse of blond, black, and chrome, the work of Getty architect Richard Meier. Even the appetizer menu is over the top: Kobe sashimi, bone marrow flan with mushroom marmalade, oxtail bouillon with chive blossoms. Nobly bred beef is listed with its geographical provenance—Illinois, Nebraska (aged 35 days), or *wagyu* imported from Japanese prefectures. Sides? How about caramelized salsify or potato *tartin*? Sherry Yard's desserts are, as always, exceptional. » Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd. (310-276-8500 or wolfgangpuck.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Steak House **$$$$**

THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY ★★
A quiet cheer pervades this Beverly Hills institution. Heads of movie studios loiter in the booths; grandes dames in headbands down cosmopolitans at lunchtime. The greeting is friendly, the service refreshingly unexcited. The food is just as genuine. Dungeness crab cocktail comes nestled on a bed of ice, the way they used to serve it at Chasen's. The Dover sole meunière and the liver and onions are sensational. Try ordering the baby back ribs or the Kobe beef burger off the menu. The cinnamon-dusted rice pudding or the bracing key lime pie makes a fine end to a memorable meal. » 9560 Dayton Way (310-276-0615 or thegrill.com). L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. American **$$$**

MAKO ★★★
The cozy dining room, snug bar, and open kitchen constitute a place of excellence and serenity. Makoto Tanaka was among the cadre of chefs Wolfgang Puck handpicked to open Chinois on Main. Since then he's done more to broaden the standards of pan-Asian cooking, with its refinement of tastes, than any other chef. The searing from the wok makes a side of green beans delicious; the steamed fish with Japanese mushrooms is masterfully seasoned. The elaborate lunchtime *bento* box, with sake-marinated baby back ribs and duck potstickers, is a perfect way to sample Tanaka's talent. » 225 S. Beverly Dr. (310-288-8338 or makorestaurant.com). L Wed.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. Asian Fusion **$$$**

MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE ★★
Mastro's may be a chain, but there's a lot to be said for prime ingredients, a friendly staff, and consistency. Everything about this place screams excess: martini shakers on the tables, shopping bags of leftovers by diners' chairs. Anywhere else, the iceberg "wedge" salad—more like a whole head—would be a meal. New York steaks, bone-in rib eyes, and veal chops are served on 400-degree plates, and the shrimp cocktail is nearly obscured by its base of dry ice. Having room for dessert suggests there's something wrong with you. » 246 N. Canon Dr. (310-888-8782 or mastrossteakhouse.com). D nightly. Full bar. Steak House **$$$**

POLO LOUNGE ★★
Everything about this institution conjures the Beverly Hills of yore, from the banana leaf-patterned carpets to the pre-recession buzz in the air. Hollywood types—and those looking to catch a glimpse of them—disappear into suede booths. The picturesque courtyard has fewer dark corners. At night, decorated with tiny white lights, it resembles a pointillist painting. The menu is American chophouse with a few twists: Lobster salad gets a kick from grapefruit and lemon, and a single outsize crab cake is dense and creamy (if a little rich). Meat dishes, like the woodsy steak au poivre and lamb chops with a salt-heavy sauce, can be inconsistent. The waitstaff are well versed in the wine list. » Beverly Hills Hotel, 9641 Sunset Blvd. (310-887-2777 or beverlyhillshotel.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. American **$$$$**

SPAGO BEVERLY HILLS ★★★
It put us on the map 25 years ago, and its alumni have helmed the stoves of just about every great L.A. restaurant. What keeps Spago alive is the food. Yes, the quality may waver depending on whom you know (or who knows you), but on its best days Wolfgang Puck's clubhouse is magnificent. The risotto with sweet shrimp is made sweeter when tossed with Santa Barbara sea urchin. A veal chop takes over the dinner table conversation. If the menu items sound familiar, it's because they inspire fads worldwide. Whether you score a spot in the

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courtyard or are crammed in the hall will affect your experience. When the stars align (and here they frequently collide), there's nothing like it. » 176 N. Canon Dr. (310-385-0880 or wolfgangpuck.com). L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. California **$$$$**

TANZORE ★
With a menu that mirrors the new India moderne decor, Tanzore dismisses the raj and trumpets the contemporary subcontinent. Toasted cumin, cardamom, and fennel seeds lend traditional flavors to the tandooris and curries, but there's a lightness to much of the food and a California streak in the basil-laced naan and the seared yellowfin with avocado *raita*. An impressive selection of wines that go well with spicy food fills a floor-to-ceiling cabinet. » 50 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-652-3894 or tanzore.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Indian **$$$**

TRATTORIA AMICI ★
This is a stamping ground for the rich, famous, and beautiful, and the dozen or so tables fill up quickly with diners hungry for hearty pastas, chicken parmigiana, and rack of lamb. Regulars start with the popular *carciofi* (artichoke) salad. A new location inside the Americana at Brand boasts the best patio in Glendale. » 469 N. Doheny Dr. (310-858-0271 or tamici.com). L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly. Also at 889 Americana Way, Glendale (818-502-1220 or amicila.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Italian **$$$**

URASAWA ★★★★
On the bang-for-buck meter, L.A.'s most expensive sushi restaurant is worth it. For $275 per person before drinks or tip, chef Hiroyuki Urasawa creates a wholly individualized experience for the handful of patrons who fit at the pale wood counter and the two adjoining tables. The finest-grade *toro* is contrasted with the tanginess of stewed chrysanthemums; a teapot is filled with a heady brew of mushrooms, ginkgo nuts, and shrimp. Whether it's a morsel delivered glistening from his forged knife or tuna seared on a hot rock, achieving purity is this chef's goal. » 218 N. Rodeo Dr. (310-247-8939). L-D by appointment. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese **$$$$**

WOLFGANG'S STEAKHOUSE ★★
This New York Import (there's no connection to Puck's place up the street) is a classic Beverly Hills steak house in every sense. The two dining rooms are decked out in caramel-colored wood and glass. On some nights, Brooklyn waiter turned restaurant owner Wolfgang Zweiner works the tables, shilling his enormous steaks that are aged in-house 28 days. The steaks are indeed spectacular—cuts of beef big enough for two, three, or four (more like eight, nine, and ten) that arrive still sizzling in brown butter on large platters. Sides and salads are the expected—beefsteak tomato and onion, all sorts of potatoes, and creamed spinach. » 443 N. Canon Dr. (310-385-0640 or wolfgangssteakhouse.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Steak House **$$$**

WESTWOOD & WEST L.A.

BAR HAYAMA ★★
Toshi Sugiura has created a space that is both quaint and sophisticated, with two intimate bars, an extensive selection of sakes (with a guide to their flavor profiles), and a menu highlighting *kozara*, or small plates. Here that means *ankimo* pâté, grilled yellowtail collar, and beef tartare with quail egg. Macrobiotic combinations are also available. The fire pit in the front garden, surrounded by communal tables, is mesmerizing. » 1803 Sawtelle Blvd., West L.A. (310-235-2000 or barhayama.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese **$$-$$$**

CRAFTBAR ★
The small-plates operation that has taken over the lounge and patio areas at Tom Colicchio's Craft is still lovely and still an incredible value. But we suspect new chefs Anthony Zappola and Shannon Swindle—fresh from Craft Dallas—may be behind Craftbar's meatier comfort food dishes like the short rib *panino* and the duck burger slider. *Jidori* chicken liver mousse arrives in a mason jar accompanied by wafer-thin toast points. The maple dipping sauce that comes with a plate of steaming hush puppies is infused with smoke. Most everything is pleasing, but not much more. » 10100 Constellation Blvd., Century City (310-279-4180 or craftrestaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Small Plates **$**

Los Angeles MAGAZINE

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TAKE A BREAK AT DOWNTOWN'S STARRY KITCHEN, WITH ITS MULTICULTI MIX-AND-MATCH APPROACH
BY LINDA BURUM

At Starry Kitchen, a lively downtown luncheonette, pan-Asian and California cuisines converge with novel results. A Thai Cobb salad is studded with pieces of lemongrass-seasoned free-range chicken, and *hoisin* mini burgers shine in a combination plate. Check the blackboard for the day's specials or play chef by picking a "protein" (maybe Taiwanese fried pork chops or the vegetarian kimchi-Parmesan rice cakes), a "vessel" (salad, wrap, sandwich, or rice plate), and a side (including fried *chapchae* noodles, curry rice, and Asian coleslaw). **The underground:** When chef Thi Tran was laid off from her job last year, she and her husband, Nguyen, decided to operate a homespun (but taboo) supper club out of their apartment. Expect Starry Kitchen to host a reprise of the popular dinner venture—this time legally. // *350 S. Grand Ave., downtown, 213-617-3474 or starrykitchen.com.*

KIRIKO SUSHI ★★
Diminutive, almost invisible in the blur of traffic, Kiriko looks like one more sushi spot, but it is among the best. The agents who stop here on their way home turn off their BlackBerrys and turn to their food. The chefs—working silently in homespun vests—set themselves apart with their command of bigger flavors. Miso soup with a meaty fish collar achieves a kind of absolute; the ramekin of sun-dried daikon sounds an ancestral note. The salmon is smoked at such a low temperature that the texture remains yielding and the applewood charcoal permeates the flesh with flavor. » 11301 W. Olympic Blvd., Ste. 102, West L.A. (310-478-7769 or kirikosushi.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D nightly. Beer, wine, and sake. Sushi **$$$**

THE SIX NEW
The burger is the thing here: a big hunk of beef on a brioche with blue cheese, Thousand Island dressing, and onion rings. Drippy and satisfying, it's the requisite style for a low-key, beery joint such as the Six, situated one block from the Westside Pavilion. This isn't all gut-bomb food, despite the four varieties of french fries. Wood-fired shrimp arrive on a bed of arugula and drizzled with a bright orange *romesco*. A fillet of wild Alaskan halibut comes with the grain of the moment, farro, as well as favas, morels, and English peas. Pizzas are ho-hum; the thinly sliced, perfectly fried onion rings are not. » 10668 W. Pico Blvd., West L.A. (310-837-6662 or thesixrestaurant.com). L daily; D Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. Gastropub **$$**

TAVERN ★★
Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne have a destination restaurant with Lucques and a tapas hot spot with AOC. But with Brentwood's Tavern they've created a local hangout. The space is large enough to allow Goin room to explore different levels of dining. At the casual front section, called the Larder, one can drop in for a pastry or a brisket sandwich at lunch. In the formal dining room, people gather in banquettes under a massive skylight for refined rustic fare. The roasted asparagus with polenta and fried egg is a classic, while the pork chops with corn bread and spiced maple syrup conveys Goin's uptown down-home authority. » 11648 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-806-6464 or tavernla.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California **$$$**

VINCENTI RISTORANTE ★★★
Brentwood has a swarm of Italian restaurants; Vincenti tops them all. It's not just the effusive greeting of owner Maureen Vincenti, the pleasant light wood decor, or the celeb-sighting potential. It's that Nicola Mastronardi is an exceptional chef. That's him bringing a pork loin out of the rotisserie or roasting whole Dover sole in the wood-burning oven (which is used Monday nights for his thin-crust pizzas). That's him overseeing antipasti plates with *burrata* and Parma prosciutto or a warm octopus and sepia salad. His dishes don't just incorporate the tastes of Italy, they broadcast its soul. » 11930 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-207-0127 or vincentiristorante.com). L Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. Italian **$$**

WESTSIDE TAVERN ★
Patina, Saddle Peak Lodge, Whist—Warren Schwartz has been chef at each, so it's intriguing to find him in a large restaurant at the Westside Pavilion. Nearly everything is sourced from independent California producers, and the cooking has an ineffable authenticity. The chicken liver mousse mingles sublimely with the toasted sourdough. You could eat the pot roast with a spoon. Produce, however, is Schwartz's strength, be it an appetizer of tempura-battered green beans with a sprightly lemon aioli or a flatbread strewn with baby artichokes and arugula. » 10850 Pico Blvd., West L.A. (310-470-1539 or westsidetavernla.com). L-D daily. Full bar. American **$$**

MARINA DEL REY

CAFE DEL REY
The menu's good-looking—sushi, shellfish sausage, black spaghetti with seafood, and violet mustard-crusted rack of lamb—at this spruced-up Marina landmark. But the food isn't as memorable as the cheery ambience and the piano bar. » 4451 Admiralty Way (310-823-6395 or cafedelreymarina.com). L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly; brunch Sun. Full bar. Global **$$$**

JER-NE
This is a mod dining room, especially for a Ritz-Carlton, but if there's a crowd in the bar and lounge, it can be excruciatingly loud. The food's first-rate, though, whether you're going for an easy Caesar salad and a burger or something fancier, like almond-dusted calamari, beef carpaccio with a tiny hen's egg, or turbot with *guanciale* and whipped *brandade*. The service is gracious. » Ritz-Carlton Marina del Rey, 4375 Admiralty Way (310-823-1700 or ritzcarlton.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California **$-$$**

SUGARFISH
At this Sushi Nozawa spin-off, the staff is California friendly and the decor fast-food mod. The menu comes in three basic renditions: Trust Me #1, Trust Me #2, and Trust Me #3. Each is larger than the last, and all are composed of cold *edamame* and tuna sashimi followed by unexciting variations on a yellowtail-*toro*-crab roll theme. Think McSushi. » 4722¼ Admiralty Way (310-306-6300 or sugarfishsushi.com). L-D daily. Beer and sake. Sushi **$$-$$$**

CULVER CITY & VENICE

AKASHA ★
Akasha is a sceney, hip spot, but this one has its feet firmly planted in a pair of Birkenstocks. The menu goes beyond chef Akasha Richmond's former vegetarian repertoire, offering meat and popular dishes like mac and cheese. But the tenets of organic, well sourced, and local serve as a launching point for an entire ecological vision. When the dishes work, whether it's a bowl of quinoa and *edamame* or hemp seed-crusted tofu salad, they radiate an earthy integrity. Creamy *cannellini* bean hummus invites dipping with warm flatbread, and a turkey burger spiked with olives and jalapeños has the kick of a classic. » 9543 Culver Blvd., Culver City (310-845-1700 or akasharestaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri., D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. New American **$$$**

BOOKS FOR HOME COOKS
Mayumi Nishimura has released Mayumi's Kitchen: Macrobiotic Cooking for Body and Soul, her first cookbook in English.

FATHER'S OFFICE
Visiting the Culver City sequel to Santa Monica's minuscule gastropub spurs a range of emotions. There's hope as you get in line. Jealousy as you view patrons munching sweet potato fries on the expansive front patio. Awe as you take in the wall of 72 taps dispensing craft beers, plus more taps for kegs of wine. Satisfaction with starters of smoked eel with horseradish crème fraîche and asparagus with crispy *serrano* ham. And something close to nirvana as you bite into that dripping, caramelized onion-topped burger that makes the whole wait worth it. » 3229 Helms Ave., Culver City (310-736-2224 or fathersoffice.com). L Fri.-Sun.; D nightly. Full bar. Also at 1018 Montana Ave., Santa Monica (310-393-BEER). D nightly. Beer and wine. Gastropub **$**

FRAÎCHE ★★★
Chef Elderoy Arendse is doing a bang-up job maintaining the seemingly effortless melding of French and Italian cuisines that original chef Jason Travi worked so hard to achieve. A farro salad highlights the grain's nuttiness with feta and mint. A hit of brandy tones down the richness of sweetbreads in a bowl of *tagliatelle*. Don't bother saving room for dessert—starting with some house-made country pâté and *lardo* makes better use of your appetite. » 9411 Culver Blvd., Culver City (310-839-6800 or fraicherestaurantla.com). Also at 312 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica (310-451-7482 or fraicherestaurantsm.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Italian **$$$**

GJELINA ★★
Low-key moneyed Venice flocks to this corner spot, and the cooking of Travis Lett is the main draw. The chef goes to a lot of trouble for farmers' market ingredients, and he's devoted to cooking with an open flame. Grilled radicchio is served with aged balsamic or paired with bacon and fontina on a pizza. Squash and farro make a soup of peasant goodness, and they're also in the risotto, a wondrous base for the lamb shank. We adore the *margherita* pizza, which, yes, is a weightless "gastronomic" pie—with little more than tomato sauce and cheese, it has a restraint that hints of nostalgia. With its earthy menu and fresh design (a Bauhaus take on the Tyrolean lodge), Gjelina captures the neighborhood. » 1429

JESSICA BOONE

Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-450-1429). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun. Beer and wine. New American $$$

JOE'S RESTAURANT ★★
Long before there was a Pinkberry on Abbot Kinney, there was Joe Miller's landmark. The beach-chic restaurant is still the best on the strip, serving salads that feature basil gelée or duck sausage and entrées like escolar with miso-yogurt sauce or sirloin with red pepper juice. The bar is friendly, brunch is a scene, and there's no beating the $18 lunch special. » 1023 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-399-5811 or joesrestaurant.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Cal-French $$$

SUBLIME FOOD LOUNGE NEW
Culver City's Wilson is now Sublime Food Lounge. The adjective might be a bit much, but the small plates menu here is surprisingly—and often successfully—daring: There are crispy confit veal "riblettes" sprinkled with a five-spice salt, roasted bone marrow with rosemary toast, seared scallops with a blood orange *gastrique*, and braised oxtail with a purple cauliflower puree as well as a large selection of charcuterie and cheeses for snacking. A giant fire pit and oversize wood booths on the patio are nice, but an innovative cocktail program—or even a cocktail menu—would help push this place over the edge. » 8631 Washington Blvd., Culver City (310-287-2093 or sublimefoodlounge.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. Small Plates $$

THE TASTING KITCHEN ★★
Chef Casey Lane's inspired, ingredient-driven menu—hand scribbled on a single sheet—changes each day, and it's attracting a titillated crew of regulars. A base of farro will support hunks of spicy sausage one night, walnuts and winter squash on another. A bowl of fresh tagliolini might star fresh cockles or pork and persimmons. There's gleeful disorder here, from the illegible writing to the size of the dishes (nothing's quite a small plate or quite a main course). Cocktails (the Aficionado mixes tequila, cynar, and port) are just as daring. » 1633 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-392-6644 or thetastingkitchen.com). D nightly. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean $$$

SANTA MONICA

ANISETTE BRASSERIE ★★
Those anticipating the food with which chef Alain Giraud (Citrus, Bastide) made his name have to rejigger their expectations. Anisette is an everyday restaurant. The menu is full of hearty French dishes that have prevailed through generations of fickle trends. The dining room is a painstaking brasserie replication down to the mismatched light fixtures, and it buzzes with fans of Giraud. The Santa Monica farmers' market is just one block away, and it shows. Even sweetbreads are enlightened by vegetables. Seafood dishes like *moules marinière* and black cod are triumphs. Skinny *frites* are everything you'd want them to be: crunchy, lightly salted, and bundled in a paper-lined metal cup. Desserts lack finesse, as do some sides. The wine list offers a navigable selection of bottles, carafes, and glasses. » 225 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-395-3200 or anisettebrasserie.com). B-D daily; L Mon.-Fri.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Brasserie $$

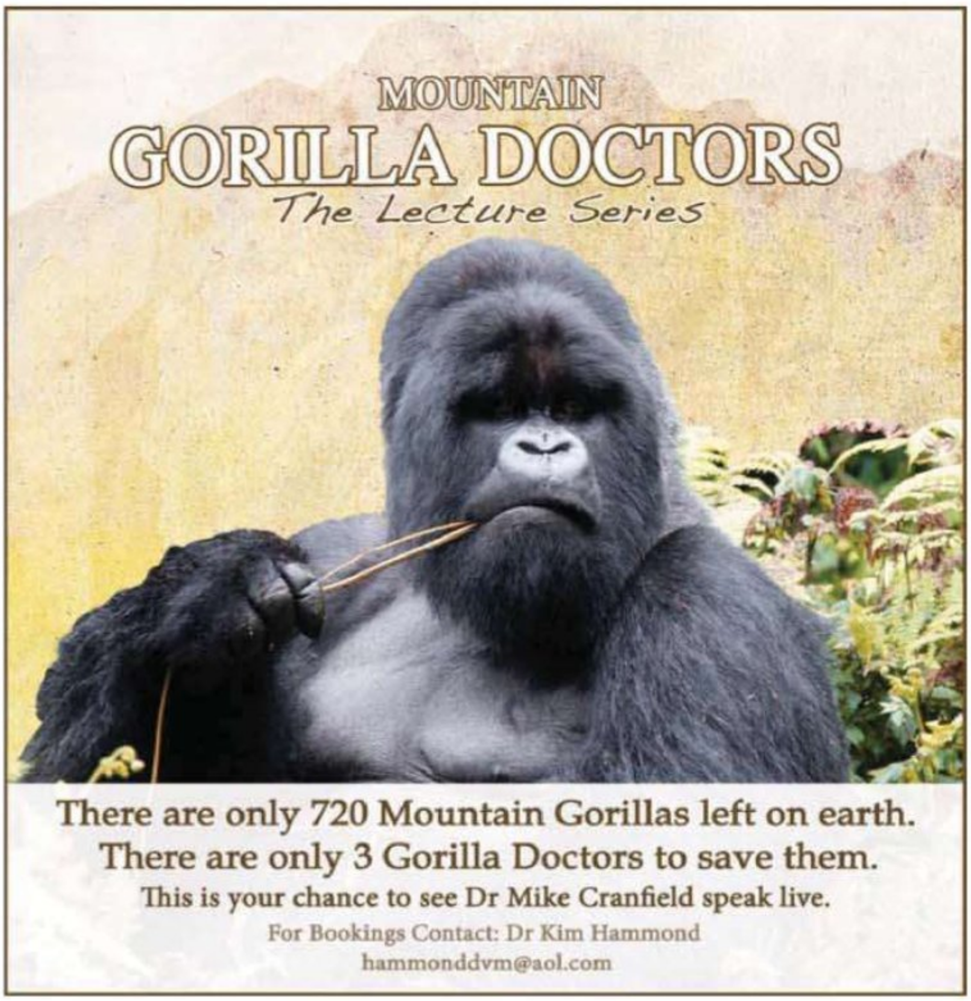
CACHÉ ★
In the space that once housed Hidden, Josiah Citrin is striving for a middle ground between his formal Mélisse and his lunch spot, Lemon Moon. Charcuterie and cheese? Check. Mason jars of spreadable treats? Yep. Tuna tartare, shrimp cocktail, and a beet salad? *Bien sûr.* On deeper inspection, these classics are a notch up from the norm. One mason jar holds an obscenely rich mix of eggplant and tapenade, the ahi in the tartare is flawless, and the beet salad comes with silky *burrata*. Among the main courses is a flaky *loup de mer* with crispy skin so good we'd eat it by itself. What sealed the meal? The Chocolate Crunch—a Butterfinger-textured chocolate explosion dusted with cocoa powder. » 3110 Main St. (310-399-4800 or cacherestaurant.com). D nightly. Full bar. New American $$$

DRAGO RISTORANTE ★★
The four Drago brothers have something of a monopoly on L.A.'s Italian dining scene, with nine restaurants among them. This one is perhaps the most formal, its carpeted rooms and upholstered seats enhancing a quiet, polished ambience. The food—salads, pastas, *carne*, and *pesce*—is solid Italian, and never more so than when the Drago matriarch visits and takes over the kitchen. » 2628 Wilshire Blvd. (310-828-1585 or celestinodrago.com). L Mon.-Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. Italian $$$

HUCKLEBERRY
Zoe Nathan, Rustic Canyon pastry chef extraordinaire, is behind this cheery café and bakery. The space is 80 percent bakery case, displaying fresh baguettes and *ciabatta*, deli salads, and fantastical pastry treats—from blueberry tart bars to banana-caramel pie. Order breakfast dishes, simple sandwiches, soups, and salads—with ingredients like La Quercia prosciutto, house-cured salmon, and farmers' market produce—at the counter. » 1014 Wilshire Blvd. (310-451-2311 or huckleberrycafe.com). B-L Wed.-Sun. No alcohol. California $

JOSIE ★★★
Civilized and refined, Josie exists outside trends. Its two dining rooms, hung with framed botanical prints, invite conversation without being hushed. Chef Josie Le Balch is as comfortable using a copper *sauteuse* as she is working the wood-burning grill. She can do frog legs amandine and not make it seem like an ironic statement. Dishes such as the skewered *seppie* with lentils and the *tagine* of beef short ribs go out along the razor's edge of inspiration. Jonna Jensen's desserts—the hazelnut-pear frangipane is stellar—match Le Balch's meticulous style. » 2424 Pico Blvd. (310-581-9888 or josierestaurant.com). D nightly. Full bar. Progressive American $$$

LA CACHETTE BISTRO ★
Jean-François Meteigner's menu is equal parts coq au vin and coffee-rubbed short ribs, which is to say a mishmash of French and New American cuisines. Both work fine. House-cured trout is paired with a mustardy warm potato salad. A rhubarb spread sets off a warm foie gras terrine. While we expected the pristine seafood in the bouillabaisse, the menu of Asian-inspired raw options was a surprise. Ahi tartare with Korean chili paste? *Sacré bleu!* » 1733 Ocean Ave. (310-434-9509 or lacachettebistro.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Bistro $$$



MÉLISSE ★★★★
Josiah Citrin's nine-year-old restaurant has a *grande maison* quality. On entering, one is enveloped in an atmosphere of pin-striped suits and premier *cru*. Citrin's cooking is delightfully frank—this is not a place where the essence of an essence will be spooned with a ceremonial hush. Crisped Parmesan croquettes bob in the earthy artichoke soup. Beef three ways highlights the gradations between cuts of meat, anchored by a sauce in which mustard is folded into a celery puree. A passion fruit soufflé with coconut sorbet and lemongrass-pistachio milk caps off a lyrical meal. The wine list is stupendous and accessible. Mélisse aims for the highest levels, without a trace of conceit. » 1104 Wilshire Blvd. (310-395-0881 or melisse.com). D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. French-American **$$$$**

MICHAEL'S ★★
When Michael McCarty opened his restaurant in 1979, he was 25 and intent on introducing the farm-to-table aesthetic that came to be called California cuisine. Some of the country's finest chefs cooked here: Ken Frank, Jonathan Waxman, Mark Peel, Nancy Silverton. Their spirit lives on in Michael Stern's menu, which abounds with top-quality local ingredients: beet salad with hazelnut-crusted chèvre and wild arugula, wild striped bass with melted leeks and potato-chorizo hash. Truth is, what could taste bad in this setting? Power brokers who would rather dine than be seen retreat to the rain forest of a back patio; in the romance department, Michael's scores through the roof. » 1147 3rd St. (310-451-0843 or michaelssantamonica.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. California **$$$**

RUSTIC CANYON ★
This is a filled-to-the-gills spot for folks who don't mind a conversational rumble. The food's got farmers' market written all over it: your beet salads, your pastas with fresh veggies, your roasted skate with braised endive and *cannellini* beans—all nicely turned out, if not revelatory. The cheese plate offered as an appetizer is more of a dessert, but it may be a good plan if you want a nosh to go with one of the festive *prosecco* cocktails (the Indochine with lemongrass, perhaps?). The beer and wine lists are well thought-out, and the alcohol-free quaffs are imaginative. » 1119 Wilshire Blvd. (310-393-7050 or rusticcanyonwinebar.com). D nightly. Beer and wine. American **$$$**

STEFAN'S AT L.A. FARM ★
With L.A. Farm's sleek remodel comes a new chef, Stefan Richter. The menu is curious—a little of this, a little of that—but most dishes are well executed, particularly those that touch on Richter's Finnish roots. A long list of single-portion starters includes "tater tots" with Hidden Valley Ranch dressing and a slider dubbed Like a Big Mac. For our main course we loved the braised pork cheek and caraway sausage with sauerkraut, pretzel dumplings, and beer sauce. Lamb loin is pan seared until pink and served atop creamy polenta with ratatouille. » 3000 Olympic Blvd. (310-449-4000 or stefansatlafarm.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. New American **$$$**

VALENTINO ★★
A couple of decades ago, Piero Selvaggio's Santa Monica landmark was serving some of the best Italian cuisine in L.A. In recent years it's been struggling to keep up the pace, and now the owners have brought in Sardinian-born chef Nicola Chessa to try his hand at reviving the legacy. Early results are mixed. A butter lettuce salad is magnificent: a stack of crisp leaves lovingly dressed with a Taleggio dressing and a sprinkle of hazelnuts. The artisanal *gli* spaghetti, however, lacks any of the kick one would expect from the advertised Pecorino and spicy oil. *Branzino* cooked in parchment is a delicate wonder, while braised veal cheeks sit in a clunky brown sauce. The restaurant added a wine bar that offers a smart menu of antipasti, pizzas, and pastas as well as the opportunity to explore the award-winning wine list. » 3115 Pico Blvd. (310-829-4313 or valentinorestaurantgroup.com). L Fri.; D Tue.-Sat. Full bar. Italian **$$$**

WILSHIRE ★★★
With its two bars, indoor dining room, patio with fire place, and cigar lounge all cleverly divided, Wilshire doesn't feel as big as it is. Chef Andrew Kirschner gives every dish his full attention. A mixed lettuce salad might have persimmons, feta, and hazelnuts; lobster and braised sweetbreads elevate a tagliatelle appetizer. Deft treatments, such as the horseradish and parsley *gremolata* on a salmon fillet or the *crosnes* (a tuber with a hint of artichoke flavor) served with roasted duck breast, indicate a confident kitchen. » 2454 Wilshire Blvd. (310-586-1707 or wilshirerestaurant.com). D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. California **$$$**

MALIBU & PACIFIC PALISADES

THE BEACHCOMBER
You can't ask for a better view, at the base of the Malibu Pier, and the room's cute, an upscale version of a crab shack. The food? A crapshoot. Mini ahi tacos could do without the squiggles of chili-laced mayo. Grilled fish with rice or potatoes is a safer way to go, but note the asparagus—the tips will have been given to someone else. Put it behind you with one of the house margaritas or an order of the hot doughnut bread pudding. » 23000 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu (310-456-9800 or thebeachcombercafe.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California **$$$**

CHARLIE'S
This is the only fancy steak and fancier taters (whipped, baked, fried, au gratin, shoestring) joint in Malibu. The crowd boasts a few older fellows in pressed jeans and their not-quite-the-same-vintage wives sampling the burly wine list or the craft beer selection. The dry-aged, bone-in rib eye is as rich as the patrons, and the white pizza is an indulgence. But waddle past the duck. The dining room hops on the weekends—owners Charlie DiLorenzo and Lisa Tomm are Malibu residents, and everyone, it seems, is a neighbor. » 22821 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu (310-456-3132 or charliesmalibu.com). D nightly. Full bar. American **$$$**

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

» Tickets to last year's Taste of the Farmers Market sold out quickly. Snag yours starting June 10 for the July 13 event.

SADDLE PEAK LODGE ★★★
Everything at this old-school "occasion" restaurant, which is housed in a historic lodge, is imposing: The wine is big, the menu is heavy on game, and the heads of horned beasts adorn the walls. Amid this Hemingwayesque scene, the meat—New Zealand elk, venison saddle, squab, Berkshire pork—is cooked with a precision that verges on daintiness. A *pot de crème* of foie gras is carefully paired with warm fruit-and-nut bread, and the service has that ideal mix of formality, personality, and smarts. » 419 Cold Canyon Rd., Calabasas (818-222-3888 or saddlepeaklodge.com). D Wed.-Sun.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. American **$$$**

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

ASANEBO ★
At this standout on Studio City's sushi row, the honey-breaded oysters are soft and sea flavored under their sweet crust. Translucent slices of kanpachi are dotted with shaved black truffles. A fragile quail egg yolk teeters atop a lump of uni. Even miso soup is heightened by the addition of spiny lobster. Its location and size have kept Asanebo under the radar, but its new Michelin star could change that. » 11941 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-760-3348). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese **$$$**

BISTRO GARDEN
It's one of the prettiest dining rooms in the city, so genuinely retro it's breathtaking. The old-world bar is a block long, tables are separated by acres of real estate, and a lofty skylighted ceiling makes the main room feel like a patio—even at night. The food is continental: liver and onions, broiled Gulf prawns, linguine with smoked salmon, caviar, and champagne cream sauce. For dessert, the famous chocolate soufflé is divine, if not remotely lemony. » 12950 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-501-0202 or bistrogarden.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Continental **$$$**

BISTRO PROVENCE
Chef Miki Zivkovic, ex of Pinot Bistro, presents a fine Cal-French menu. Start with crab salad—heavy on the crab, light on the endive and orange vinaigrette. Entrées are a

LALIST

BUZZ-WORTHY EVENTS
HAPPENINGS
AND PROMOTIONS



GIRLS NIGHT OUT AT WESTFIELD CENTURY CITY

Thursday, June 3, 6-9 pm
10250 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles

Join us at Westfield Century City for Girls Night Out. Cocktails, treats, VIP gift bag, and shopping! Check out **Westfield.com** for all of the details.

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SN Queens Jewelry is the premier destination for distinctive jewelry. Located in the heart of the Jewelry District in L.A., we specialize in handmade jewelry that is vintage inspired but with a contemporary edge.





From left: China Grill at Mandalay Bay; the frozen vodka locker at Red Square

CHINA GRILL MANAGEMENT HOT SPOTS AT MANDALAY BAY

3950 Las Vegas Boulevard
Las Vegas
www.chinagrillmgt.com

This summer, spend your Sin City getaway at any of Jeffrey Chodorow's China Grill Management hotspots in Mandalay Bay. Chill in the frozen vodka locker donned in authentic Russian army coats and full-length furs at Red Square. Enjoy unlimited Brazilian rodizio by day, or dance the night away to the beats of conga drums at rumjungle. Sip on cocktails and feast on a dramatically prepared dinner surrounded by friends at the legendary China Grill.

Photo: Stefanie Keenan



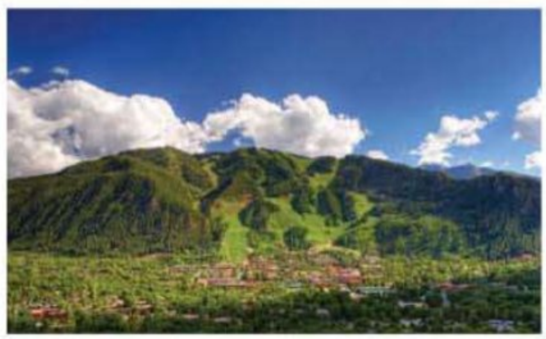


From left: Catharine Soros and Tim Disney; Glenn Ligon, Jamie Lynton, and James Franco

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY/ CALARTS THEATER

631 West Second Street
Los Angeles
(213) 237-2800
www.redcat.org

In March REDCAT patrons and artists gathered to honor philanthropist Tim Disney and conceptual artist Glenn Ligon. Also celebrating CalArts's 40th anniversary, this year's gala, co-chaired by Jamie Lynton and Catharine Soros, was emceed by CalArts trustee Don Cheadle and featured a live performance by Laurie Anderson as well as special tributes by Cathy Opie, Terence McFarland, Alfre Woodard, and James Franco.



ASPEN GETAWAY

Enter to win the ultimate Aspen getaway for two: round trip domestic airfare to Aspen for two, a three-night stay at the Hotel Jerome, a $100 gift certificate to one of Aspen's finest restaurants, two tickets to an Aspen show (options include: Aspen Music Festival & School, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Theatre Aspen) and the Perfect Summer Card. Go to aspenchamber.org/losangeles for details.

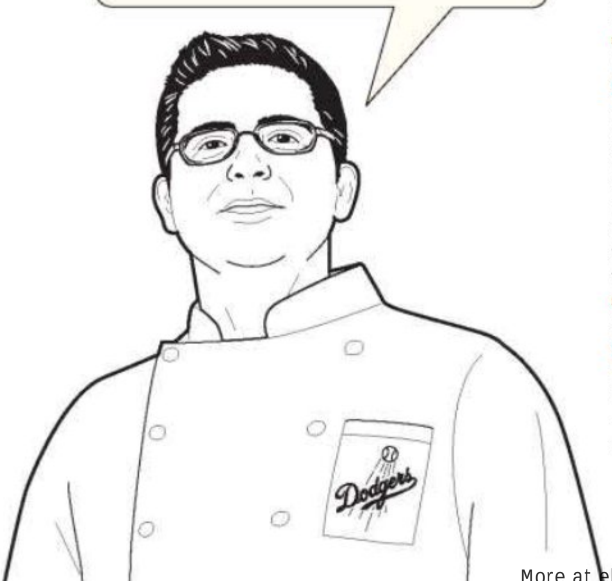
Aspen, an exceptional mountain town with world-class attractions.

Come experience Aspen's adventure, arts, dining, unique shopping, and family fun in a relaxed mountain setting. For more information on Aspen events, lodging, and activities go to **www.aspenchamber.org**.

AMUSE BOUCHE

WE ASKED **JOSEPH MARTIN**, EXECUTIVE CHEF AT DODGER STADIUM, WHAT TOPS HIS DODGER DOGS?

Mustard and onions only—sometimes nothing. **Beyond franks, isn't the job all about peanuts and nachos?** No way. On opening day in the Dugout Club, we served 280 pounds of prime rib tenderloin. Another day we served grouper. We go on the Monterey Bay Aquarium Web site and make sure all the fish we serve is sustainable, and we try to get as many local products as possible. We work with organic farms for proteins and produce. And now we have the My Town section, located on the reserve level, where there is a different cuisine theme every time: Cuban, Korean, Filipino—even *Star Wars*. **So you have to say you're a Dodger fan, right?** I am a fan! I grew up in L.A., and I used to have season tickets. This was actually the first job that I applied for right out of culinary school. Today I make it a point to watch about an inning per game. When you take a step back after a hard day of feeding 56,000 food critics, you realize how lucky you are. **What does Manny eat?** Last time we cooked for the team, he wanted pasta and chicken.



steal, mostly $20 and under: paella with mussels, rock shrimp, clams, and sausage, or garlic-glazed chicken with garlic fries. » 345 N. Pass Ave., Burbank (818-840-9050 or bistroprovence.net). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat.; brunch Sun. Beer and wine. Cal-French $$$

BOKADO ★
This sharp Spanish market and café spills onto the Ventura Boulevard sidewalk, where diners accompanied by their dogs devour *jamón*-laden charcuterie plates. A tapas menu includes *manchego* and chicken croquettes, zucchini pockets stuffed with Catalonian spinach, and a mini portion of seafood *paella valenciana*. Poking through a little cup of roasted artichoke hearts in search of briny *berberechos* (Spanish clams) is like a treasure hunt. Larger options such as skirt steak with *romesco* and a *dorade* fillet dressed with olive oil, sea salt, and garlic are available as well. » 12345 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-752-9222). B Sat.-Sun.; L-D daily. Full bar. Spanish $$

BRANDYWINE
The shoe-box-size dining room with lace curtains will have you thinking you're near Marseilles—as will the crock of French onion soup with melted Gruyère and the piping hot bouillabaisse with saffron, king crab, and the plumpest of shrimp. The menu includes everything from frog legs and beluga caviar to filet mignon and rack of lamb. You owe it to yourself to order the crêpes suzette. » 22757 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills (818-225-9114). L Tue.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Beer and wine. Continental $$$$

KIWAMI ★
When sushi chef extraordinaire Katsuya Uechi joined with nightlife company SBE to open Katsu-ya, many of his fans were disappointed. But his newest restaurant, Kiwami, feels like a labor of love. Uechi is there doting on aficionados at the small sushi bar as well as families with *udon*-slurping tykes. Homegrown hits include *agedashi* tofu done "Kiwami style" (mixed with veggies, fried, and served in a savory sauce), melt-away hunks of *kanpachi* in a tangy *ponzu*-Dijon dressing, and dollops of *uni* atop pink slices of smoked yellowtail. The *omakase* menu is a relative bargain at $70. » 11920 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-763-3910). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$

LE PETIT BISTRO
The atmosphere is convivial yet intimate, the food is excellent, and the bistro fare includes black mussels marinara, frog legs, veal sausage, baby lamb chops, and profiteroles. » 13360 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-501-7999). D nightly. Full bar. Also at 631 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A. (310-289-9797). Beer and wine. French $$

MARCHÉ
Andre Guerrero has turned over the kitchen at the old Max to Gary Menes, the former Palate chef who's obviously drawing inspiration from the market-driven menu at his previous post. The potted *poulet* is rich and reminiscent of Thanksgiving leftovers. Pork belly—inherently delicious—lacks the faintest hint of seasoning. All hope is not lost: The menu changes weekly, which means Menes may yet find what works. » 13355 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-784-2915). D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. New California $$

MISTRAL
An elegant dining room with chandeliers, dark paneling, and a near-silent crew of servers sets the stage for sophisticated French cuisine. Start with the escargots or the foie gras with baked apples. A salad of beets, blue cheese, and walnuts on a bed of frisée is a standout. Halibut with beurre blanc comes with mixed vegetables, tender venison medallions with creamy mashed potatoes and wilted greens. For dessert you can't do better than the chocolate soufflé. » 13422 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-981-6650). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. French $$$$

SUSHI KATSU-YA ★
A compact storefront adjoining a pet shop, the original Katsu-ya represents the brilliance of Valley sushi. Without fail, there's a line outside. Inside, connoisseurs cluster at an elbow-burnished counter. This is where Katsuya Uechi began accentuating the fish's clean simplicity with contrasting textures, temperatures, and spices. Eating the fiery Cajun halibut cheeks and the nuggets of spicy tuna on crispy rice, you've found your way to the source. » 11680 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-985-6976). L-D daily. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$

SWEETSALT FOOD SHOP **NEW**
Everyone loves the tuna melt from Paty's, but Toluca Lake has long been in need of more upmarket lunch options. Sweetsalt Food Shop is a shabby-chic nook of a place from former 15 chef and short-lived *Top Chef* contestant Alex Eusebio. The duck confit sandwich includes creamy goat cheese and lavender honey. A fig vinaigrette dresses a salad of *mâché*, frisée, and applewood-smoked bacon, served with a blue cheese *crostini*. Among the seasonal soups on our visit was the clever Pearagus—yes, that's pear and asparagus. Fancy olives and nibbles like bacon-truffle popcorn are just as fun. » 10218½ Riverside Dr., Toluca Lake (818-509-7790 or sweetsaltfood.com). L daily; D Mon.-Thu. No alcohol. California $

THIRD AND OLIVE
Miki Zivkovic, the chef-owner of Bistro Provence, operates this intimate French Mediterranean restaurant. Fine-dining standards like beef Wellington, bouillabaisse, and sea bass *en papillote* are joined by inspired dishes such as *pappardelle* with lamb *ragù* and mint ricotta and crispy thyme gnocchi with spring peas. Nothing soars, but everything satisfies—especially the wine list with loads of bottles in the $30 range. The soft music and candlelight make for plenty of romance. » 250 E. Olive Ave., Burbank (818-846-3900). L-D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. French $$

GLENDALE, PASADENA & SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

AUNTIE EM'S KITCHEN
This popular spot specializes in fresh, often organic comfort food—soups, shepherd's and potpies, salads—served on retro plates. Weekend brunches of honey-orange French toast and open-faced sandwiches are hearty. » 4616 Eagle Rock Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-255-0800). B-L daily. BYOB. American $$

BASHAN ★
Appropriate to the résumé of chef Nadav Bashan (Michael's, Providence), the seafood at this neighborhood find is superb. Roasted Atlantic monkfish sits in an awe-inspiring butter sauce. Tender leeks and hunks of bacon are the bed for plush New Bedford scallops. Duck breast and short ribs also shine. And how often do sweetbreads, barramundi, and pork belly pop up at your corner café? » 3459 N. Verdugo Rd., Glendale (818-541-1532 or bashanrestaurant.com). D Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. Cal-French $$$

CACAO MEXICATESSEN
CaCao Mexicatessen offers a slew of Mexican specialties scribbled nonchalantly on a chalkboard, including the exquisite combo of fries drenched in mole. Everything is handmade, down to the thick corn tortillas. Step up to the counter and order a taco with squash blossoms, strips of *poblano*, and *queso fresco* or one with smoky bacon strips and *salsa de cacao*. *Tortas* are stuffed to the point of cumbersome (fine by us), and a tangy *nopales* salad could feed four. » 1576 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-478-2791 or cacaodeli.com). B-L-D Tue.-Sun. No alcohol. Mexican $

THE DINING ROOM AT THE LANGHAM ★★★
Now that *Top Chef* winner Michael Voltaggio—who comes via the über-trendy Bazaar by José Andrés at the SLS Hotel—is in the kitchen, foodies are again flocking to the stuffy hotel dining room. Forget the flashy résumé; it's Voltaggio's superb molecular gastronomy-fueled cooking that will keep the place packed. The menu is a one-page list of tasting-size dishes that fuse modern technique with a seasonal focus. A pile of diced summer heirlooms is topped with a layer of Parmesan filled with a yellow tomato puree that's meant to mimic a fried egg. A pastrami-cured pigeon sits in a rye-infused jus with "brussels-kraut." The wine list, curated by the charming Matthew Lathan, is as hefty as ever. » Langham Huntington Hotel, 1401 S. Oak Knoll Ave., Pasadena (626-585-6218 or thediningroom langham.com). D Tue.-Sat. Full bar. New American $$$$

DISH BISTRO
Chef Job Carder's small plates are something of a revelation in Old Pasadena. A potent trio of roasted garlic, braised shallots, and black Tuscan kale accompanies the tender Lambsicle (or chop), and the charred octopus carpaccio, crowned with sweet grapefruit, is delicate enough to help you forget the plodding service (maybe we were there on an off night). Larger plates include *pappardelle* in a hearty lamb ragout and petrale sole with grilled baby leeks. Bored with chocolate *pot de crème*? Try the grape-

JASON LEE

fruit tart instead. » 53 E. Union St., Pasadena (626-795-5546 or dishbistroandbar.com). L-D Tue.-Sat.; brunch Sun. Full bar. Small Plates **$$**

ELEMENTS KITCHEN

This outpost of Old Pasadena's Elements Café **NEW** occupies a light and roomy space beside the courtyard of the moribund Pasadena Playhouse. The menu scrambles from crispy fried chicken livers to Vietnamese steamed sablefish to frisée and Scotch duck egg salad. The variety's nice, but the kitchen could use more focus. The triple oxtail consommé is rich and flavorful, and the PF&J (pistachio butter, foie gras *torchon*, and jellied sauterne) has a tasty balance of sweet and savory. Still, we'd be happy for more flavor from the flank steak and the kimchi tacos and for a better fit between the seared black cod fillet and its bed of feisty Basque *chorizo pipérade*. » 37 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena (626-440-0044 or elementskitchen.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. New American **$$$**

LARKIN'S

The communal tables on the porch of this converted Craftsman are packed with locals sipping fruit punch or BYO wine from mason jars as they dig into fried okra or crispy Alaskan salmon cakes. Good Ole' Fried Chicken with baby red masheds, a pork chop smothered in gravy, and corn-battered catfish are no more shy about their caloric content than the twice-baked mac and cheese. » 1496 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-254-0934 or larkins joint.com). L-D Tue.-Sat.; brunch Sun. Liquor license pending. Soul Food **$$**

MIKE & ANNE'S

This refined, rustic space is a warm and friendly neighborhood bistro, with a giant patio, exposed wood beams, and sepia photographs of South Pasadena. The chef knows his seasonal ingredients: ricotta-stuffed squash blossoms, Hawaiian snapper with sunchoke puree and baby squash, a juicy pork chop with stone fruit salsa. » 1040 Mission St., South Pasadena (626-799-7199 or mikeand annes.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat.; brunch Sat.-Sun. American Bistro **$$**

NOIR FOOD AND WINE ★

The feeling at this cozy nook of a wine bar is arty, smart, and relaxed. Among the wine-friendly small plates by veteran L.A. chef Claude Beltran (he trained under Thomas Keller at Checkers) are a spicy andouille and shrimp gumbo, wild boar *chile verde* with chayote, and seared black cod with cheesy grits and snap peas. One doesn't expect to see these edibles alongside cheese plates and a bistro burger. More than 50 well-priced wines are offered by the glass, in addition to a half-dozen rotating flights. » 40 N. Mentor Ave., Pasadena (626-795-7199 or noirfoodandwine .com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Beer and wine. Wine bar **$$**

OINKSTER

The best thing about this joint, owned by Max chef Andre Guerrero, is the pastrami. The beef is house cured for two weeks and applewood smoked, and the sandwich comes with all the "oinks"—red cabbage slaw, caramelized onions, Gruyère. Along with the traditional flavors, there's a milkshake made with purple *ube*. The A-frame might scream converted Dairy Queen, but this is a fast-food-for-foodies emporium. Barbecued pulled pork on a soft roll doesn't do it for you? Try the classic cheeseburger. » 2005 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-255-6465 or theoinkster.com). B Sat.-Sun.; L-D daily. Liquor license pending. American **$**

WHAT'S HAPPENING

» Help fill the bellies of hungry children. June 6 marks the Taste of the Nation charity event at Culver City's Media Park.

PALATE FOOD + WINE ★★

Octavio Becerra does artisanal the right way. Fried zucchini flowers stuffed with farmstead cheese are impossibly crisp. Channel Islands squid arrive in a jumble with blanched garlic slices and a splash of vinegar. The pork belly is luscious enough to be deemed profound. A back room doubles as a communal dining area and wine store. We recommend the wine list overseen by Steve Goldun. » 933 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale (818-662-9463 or palate foodwine.com). D Mon.-Sat. Beer and wine. California **$$**

QUADRUPEL BRASSERIE

Caramel-colored wood, a coffered ceiling, **NEW** vintage lighting—the petite space looks every bit the old-world throwback it aims to be. Part brasserie, part Belgian brewpub, Quadrupel (named for a style of ale) offers more than 75 varieties of beer, albeit mostly in bottles. Snacks like the sausage sampler and sweet-and-sour shallot rings are ideal bar foods, and though the honey-braised pork shank may verge on being too polite, the shiitake-filled *jidori* chicken roulade on polenta asserts itself in all the right ways. The bread pudding's fine, but the Belgian chocolate plate (with *pot au crème*, truffles, and more) is hard to deny. » 43 E. Union St., Pasadena (626-844-2922 or quadrupelbrasserie.com). D Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. Brasserie **$$-$$$**

TRATTORIA TRE VENEZIE ★

This Old Pasadena cottage is a refuge. A beamed ceiling and walls hung with burled-wood frames recall an elegant mountain inn. The cooking concentrates on the northernmost regions of Italy. You'll love the *farro pappardelle* with tarragon-rabbit sauce. *Bollito misto*, the traditional dish of boiled meats, is accessorized with candied-fruit mustard. » 119 W. Green St., Pasadena (626-795-4455). L Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. Northern Italian **$$$**

SOUTH BAY

AIMEE'S

Buttery escargots, *epaule d'agneau*, and tender beef bourguignonne bring a bit of France to Redondo Beach. Owner Aimee Mizrahi's warmth explains the loyal clientele—as does the hearty bouillabaisse. The dessert tray includes an outstanding Valrhona chocolate cake. Regulars will tell you that the prix fixe menu, offering three courses for less than $30, is the way to go. » 800 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Redondo Beach (310-316-1081 or aimeesbistro .com). D Tue.-Sun. Beer and wine. French **$$$**

CAFÉ PIERRE ★

After a guest stint in 2009, acclaimed chef Rémi Lauvand (New York's Le Cirque, Citrus, Social) was tapped to wipe the sand off of chef-owner Guy Gabriele's 32-year-old Manhattan Beach institution. His revised menu is a mix of old and new, simultaneously honoring the bistro's French roots (steak au poivre, house-made charcuterie, *brandade provençale*) and the clientele's health-conscious ethos (light fish dishes and market-inspired salads). In trying to be a one-stop shop for upscale cuisine, the café's execution of some of the classics—the rabbit is dry—suffer. We wish Lauvand would just stick to his fun jars of foie gras parfait without a requisite tuna tartare. The renowned wine list is global, highlighted by "Hidden Gems." » 317 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach (310-545-5252 or cafepierre.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. French **$$$**

HUDSON HOUSE

At Redondo Beach's Hudson House, the brews number more than 40—most of them bottled—and include lesser-known offerings such as Oaked Arrogant Bastard, Le Fleur, and several entries from Maui Brewing Co. The pretzel burger—with grilled onions, bacon, and Jarlsberg—is a favorite here. Yep, there are fries (sweet potato and shoestring), but the menu serves more ambitious pub grub, too: lamb sugarcane skewers with a honey-yogurt *harissa*, state fair-worthy cauliflower fritters, and bacon-chive biscuits with spicy honey butter. » 514 N. Pacific Coast Hwy., Redondo Beach (310-798-9183 or hudsonhousebar .com). D nightly. Full bar. Gastropub **$**

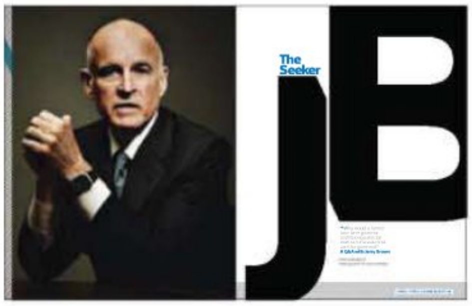
PETROS ★

This Grecian outpost crawls with beachcombers dining on wild snapper with lemon and olive oil, tender grilled octopus, or roasted chicken stuffed with feta and oregano. We love the cheeses: *kasseri*, *kefalotiri*, and *manouri*, an unsalted sheep's cheese drizzled with honey. » 451 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach (310-545-4100 or petrosrestaurant.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Greek **$$$**

RESTAURANT CHRISTINE

Stepping into these quirky, stylish rooms is like entering the home of a friend. The Pac Rim-accented food—sesame-glazed salmon with sticky rice, lobster ravioli, warm mushroom salad with Gorgonzola—is as elegant as the service. » 24530 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance (310-373-1952 or restaurantchristine.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Mediterranean/Pacific Rim **$$$**

For more listings of restaurants throughout the Los Angeles area, go to LAmag.com.



The Seeker

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 121] having said that, there are still outlets. There are newspapers, there are news shows, there's the Internet. There's the people themselves. And I believe that a well-run, people-to-people campaign with adequate funding will offer an alternative so that the vote will be informed and will not be totally manipulated by consultants and Madison Avenue-type advertising.

Do you believe that odds are nine to one in your case? I don't believe they're nine to one. I wasn't running for governor then. I'm saying that, as a system over time, the danger of plutocracy is real. And yet we've seen in the past where the "rule by money" has been overcome, because people are revolted by the attempted manipulation of a public debate.

Do you think the experience that California voters have had with Governor Schwarzenegger, who is not popular now with either Democrats or Republicans, could be seen as a cautionary tale about what happens when an inexperienced person jumps into the governorship? Well, it says that the private sector is not the golden road to political success. In the private sector one acts privately, one can make certain arrangements that are not allowed in the public sector, and one has one essential criterion, which is revenue over expenses. A CEO does act unilaterally in many cases and can outsource and fire in ways that a governor can't. That really is the difference. Government deals with a range of political and civic expectations that are far different from running a movie business or an Internet auction house.

Southern, Northern, and Central California have interests that often conflict with one another. The state's rich and poor, the native born and recent immigrants, also sometimes find themselves in opposition. How can you be governor to all these Californians? With patience and insight and prolonged engagement of the different factions. California is divided politically and geographically and in the distribution of resources. And that's been a part of the landscape since it became a state in 1850. So that all goes with the territory.

How do you account for the intensity of the political polarization in Sacramento? The number one factor is how that devastating economic collapse, caused by unregulated risky business behavior—as much as $11 trillion in lost wealth—has slopped over into California and become the major contributor to California's budget crisis. When you have huge growth in wealth, it's easier to collaborate. Now we're allocating economic stress, and that's much more challenging.

And the number two factor? The ideological sharpening and intensification of the two parties. The Republicans and the Democrats have to stop acting like cults and more like broad organizations of political involvement more carefully attuned to the average voter and not to the more activist minority that dominates the parties today.

Should you take office next year as a governor at least nominally affiliated with one of those two cults, how do you deprogram the Republicans and the Democrats? In the way that I always have. I have been a critic of the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party. I've run against President Carter and President Clinton. I've stood against the status quo in Sacramento as well as Washington, and yet I've worked with all the establishment elements. So as I say, you need an insider's knowledge and an outsider's mind, and you listen to people and you realize that no one perspective will ever predominate in a diverse state. It always comes down to forging a consensus, which I was able to do as governor on many occasions.

Your father, Pat Brown, was such a builder when he was governor. His master plan for higher education elevated the state's universities into the ranks of the world's finest. His water resources plan gave rise to the California aqueduct, which now bears his name. In this era, can the governor of California possibly accomplish things of that magnitude? I think that you can do what the people want. If the people wish to live within their current revenues, then we're going to have to be very efficient and very lean. I think the first goal right now is to stabilize our budget and engage both parties and all 120 legislators in a serious scrutiny of every major item in the budget, and that will take months and months. And I intend to do that starting in December.

With the most recent tuition hikes, a University of California education with room and board now costs $27,000 a year, and more increases loom; a Cal State student living with her parents has to pay about $15,000 a year. Do you think your father's achievement of providing affordable higher education to Californians regardless of need has been undone? It's getting undone, but I think we can curb the fees. Since my father's time, and since my last time as governor, the prisons and prison medical spending have skyrocketed and absorbed more and more of the general fund of the state budget, so that uses up funds that would have gone to the universities. The universities are getting a pittance compared to what they used to get. I'd like to see that change when I become governor.

By releasing nonviolent drug offenders from state prisons? I don't think they are nonviolent drug offenders. It's very hard to get into prison today. You have to really cause havoc in your community to get arrested, but prison health care is way overspent. It's gone up dramatically to $14,000 a prisoner a year—the highest in the world. I'm fighting that excess, and I believe if we can get in front of the Supreme Court, we have a good chance of cutting it back. So I think there are savings in uniting and integrating our efforts, as in parole and probation. And if we develop differing sentencing structures, I think we can control criminal behavior at a lower cost, and that's imperative for us to generate more funds for higher education.

More funds, maybe, but we'll still be falling short of making higher education available to every Californian academically up to the task. It's not going to be that affordable. America has been increasing its inequality. It doesn't fit with the norms of Christian humanism, but it just happens to be late-stage capitalism and how it functions. Technology, globalization, and financialization mean that those who work at the commanding heights feel entitled to huge bonuses and salaries while at the same time feeling like those at the lower end of the scale have got to compete with the people of China, India, and Mexico. That is where we are. It's a very odd situation, and it's certainly not been the historic pattern for what the U.S. has stood for.

Last year seemed like a pretty bad one for Christian humanism, with all the state cuts to programs for the poor, the disabled, and early childhood development. Do you see even more hardships ahead? I do see a tough year, and you have to remember California does spend more than most places. There is no limit as to what people could spend through government, given the inequality of society, given the environmental challenges, given the breakdown of neighborhoods and the problems with crime and education—tens and tens of billions of dollars, if not hundreds of billons, that could plausibly be proposed. The only limit is the revenue we collect, and we've got to learn to live within that limit.

What can a governor do about these inequalities as they affect Californians? The state of California can mitigate them, and certainly as a Democrat and as someone allied with the representatives of working people, I will do everything I can—as opposed to someone whose campaign embodies the very excesses we're discussing.

So could Ms. Whitman expect a state income tax increase if you become governor? No, I think the income tax is contributing an excessive amount to the state budget. When I was governor, the income tax was lower than the sales tax. It was about 33 percent of the general fund. Now it's 55 percent. It's far too unstable, and the tax base has to be broader than it is today. No, California taxes are very high on high-wealth individuals. They're higher than they are in the rest of the country [except for Hawaii and Oregon]. If you make California such a high-tax state, you're going to deter investment, and you're going to deter people from wanting to live here. I mean, we're in a competitive world. We can create a little island called California. If Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Texas all get to have less taxes, and if that's where all of our business goes, we're going to have even more of a problem than we do now. It's really a loser to follow that path.

When you were governor, you opposed Proposition 13, which severely curtailed property taxes, and then you said you enforced it and implemented it to the best of your ability when it became law. Knowing what you know now about its impact on California, would you have fought more strongly against it, or less strongly, or would you not have opposed it at all? Well, I couldn't have fought more strongly unless I had billions of dollars to fight against it, but that was irrelevant because property taxes were doubling. Property taxes never jumped as high in the history of California than in the years leading up to Prop. 13, and that was a function of two things: property tax reform, which eliminated the discretionary authority of assessors such that when values increased, assessors had to increase the value of all property; they couldn't hold back home owners' taxes and just let commercial and industrial property taxes rise. And number two, the unprecedented inflation of the '70s. Given that tidal wave of tax increases, the voters took things into their own hands and turned out in June of '78 in greater numbers than any other time before or since in California history.

In a recent radio interview, you mentioned that the $5 billion surplus you had amassed as governor helped shore up police and fire departments and schools after Proposition 13 began to reduce funding. Yes. Absent that money held in abeyance, we would have had the same crisis as now. You would have had massive layoffs in L.A. That didn't happen because I did run a very frugal government. Some Republicans—they haven't lived here that long, so they don't know, but I ran a very tight ship. No one has been a more frugal governor than I was.

Some liberal Proposition 13 critics, among them Harold Meyerson of The Washington Post, *have written that the anger leading to the bill's passage was fueled in part by the public's awareness that the state was sitting on a $5 billion surplus and wasn't rebating it for tax relief. Do you think that's an unfair characterization?* Completely. It's called a rainy day fund, and that's exactly what California needs today. Then when you go into a recession, you don't have to lay everyone off, but you spend your surplus until the economy comes back. There were more than enough spending bills when I was governor to wipe out that surplus a couple of times over. But I didn't let that happen, and that isn't why people voted. They voted for Prop. 13 to lower their property taxes, not because I was able to run a frugal government. I know a lot of people believe what you just said, but that's a canard. That's what I call liberal revisionism.

Are you personally as frugal as you were when you were governor? I know you took a vow of poverty when you became a Jesuit novice. I did take a vow of poverty, and I signed a will and gave all my meager possessions away. But I retracted that when I left the seminary, so I definitely have possessions.

But do you consider yourself personally frugal? I live a decent life. Did my wife make my lunch today? Yes. Do we have leftovers for several days? Yes. Do we borrow money for vacations? No. Do we buy anything we can't afford? No. I live well within my means, as did my parents and their parents before them.

So have you ever bought anything on eBay? No, I go on eBay to see how well my old campaign buttons are doing. I find they've become more valuable than they were two years ago.

Whatever happened to the Dodge Dart you used to drive when you were governor instead of being chauffeured in a state limousine? That wasn't a Dodge Dart. Please do not revise history that much. It was a Plymouth, a Plymouth Valiant. And it was in front of my old apartment just last week when I had a fund-raiser there.

Would you forsake the mansion for the apartment this time around and drive yourself? I don't think I would drive the Plymouth Valiant because it was a new car in 1975. It's a little old now. My wife's upstairs. I'll consult with her on my living arrangements. That will be a long family discussion.

As a onetime resident of Los Angeles, can you give us your impressions of the city when you visit it? I lived in Laurel Canyon for 16 years, from 1973 to 1988. It's definitely more crowded on the streets, with more people, more cars, more businesses. There's certainly dynamism in Los Angeles that's still there. Downtown's more vital than ever, so that's good.

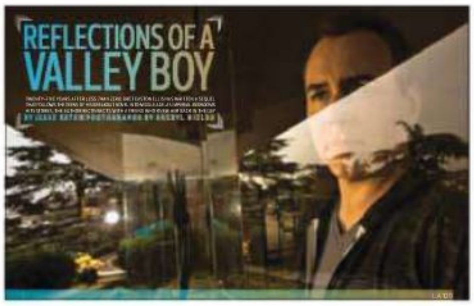
What would it mean for campaign politics in California if Meg Whitman wins the election? I think it will be the wave of the future if it works. I think you'll see it in other states, and then somewhere along the line you'll see a revolt from that and a reaction and a revolution that will result—hopefully in the same way that Roosevelt was able to curb the excesses of the laissez-faire of the Roaring '20s.

As governor you signed legislation establishing a 55 percent solar tax credit. It was the most extensive in the country, and California was the world leader for a period of years. It no longer is, though.

Why not? Because the people who were elected were not interested. They were more sensitive to fossil fuels, oil, coal energy, waste, and excess. Certainly Reagan as president preempted California's state appliance energy standards and showed no interest in conservation or renewable energy and was very comfortable with the American people being dependent on Arab oil and other unstable sources of fuel. Through [Assembly Bill] 32, Governor Schwarzenegger has attempted to create the opportunity for more energy sustainability, which is very good. It's important in the near term that we reduce oil imports and protect the environment and make our economy more efficient. But that is not going to be the rule when you say, "Let the market decide." The idea that we don't need a policeman on Wall Street makes as much sense as saying we don't need a policeman in gang-filled neighborhoods.

At 37 you were the youngest California governor in the 20th century. And should you enter another term at 73, you'll be... The oldest. But probably not the oldest in the 21st century. In 2050, I'm sure they'll be older. ■

Ed Leibowitz is a Los Angeles *magazine writer-at-large. His article on road rage appeared in the February issue.*



Bret Easton Ellis

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 131] *Imperial Bedrooms*, to be ensuring that his brand, his identity as a storyteller, survives. Every writer today is having to figure that out.

"Correct," he says.

"Your ability to market yourself and gain value from who you are is more entirely your responsibility," I say.

"And I am glad," he says.

"Being responsible for ourselves," I say, "that's terrifying and yet ultimately, maybe, liberating."

"Like love," he says. I snort with laughter, certain that nothing so earnest could be coming from Bret, but he takes a long pull on his cigarette and says it again. "Like love, Jesse."

This is the flip side of being a brand: Hidden behind the ennui and the Wayfarers, lost in the name-dropping, club-hopping, coke-snorting Brat Pack caricatures, is an intellectually nimble, wickedly funny, and, dare I say, disarmingly sensitive soul. Bret may traffic in nihilism and debauchery—as a chilling satirist if you are a fan, as a banal glamorizer if you are not—but in the empty courtyard of the symbolic Hotel California, on a night when L.A. is a shimmering mirage, he is expansive and eloquent, clever, generous, vulnerable. "I had a really rough time adjusting to being an adult back here," says Bret, who bought a condo in West Hollywood in 2006 after spending most of his postcollege years in New York. "The force of the alienation and isolation of the city really hit me full on in a way that it never had. Regardless of if you're in a relationship or have a lot of friends or whatever—in L.A., it doesn't matter. You're still alone a lot of the time. It's just a totally different idea of living. Can you tell me where in Manhattan this would be happening right now? Literally, where in Manhattan? A deserted Polo Lounge patio. God. This is it. This is really what Los Angeles is like, in a way."

Although the Polo Lounge is not a version of the city I have ever claimed for myself, that long-ago visit with Bret, that haunting, melodramatic episode would prove to be one of the images that would entice me to make my life here after Bennington. "That night was part of my initial romantic attachment to L.A.," I tell him, and to try to explain, I recount what for me are its unforgettable elements: the tie, the convertible, the devil winds, the bartender serving us by candlelight.

"You just described that, and I almost got a chill," says Bret, making a sudden reassessment of L.A. "Like I would not even put that in a book. That's just too cool. *The power went out at the Polo Lounge.* Oh, please, cut it out. Get real."

"By the way," I say.

"What?" he says.

"This," I say, unknotting the slate and salmon tie from my neck, a tie that has been hanging in my closet for more than half my life, "is yours."

"I thought it looked familiar," he says.

"Did it?" I say.

"And it fits the Polo Lounge—pink, gray," he says. "Nice touch."

"It's a little frayed," I admit.

"So you're giving it back to me?" he says. "No, you're keeping it."

* * * * *

As in *Less Than Zero,* the Clay of *Imperial Bedrooms* bears some resemblance to Bret. The narrator is a moderately successful screenwriter who has just returned to L.A. from New York, and while helping cast his latest project, finds himself both ensnared and repulsed by Hollywood's propensity for mutual exploitation. The story parallels Bret's own disappointment with the filming of his fourth book, *The Informers*, a script that he wrote and coproduced but that "slowly deformed" into a movie he tried to disavow. "The collapse of that project had a lot to do with my depression and angst about the city," says Bret, who in recent years has devoted himself as much to film and TV as to novels. "You're always taught a fascinating new lesson."

Text messages and Internet videos have replaced pay phones and Betamaxes—Equinox instead of Nautilus, Koi in lieu of Chasen's, Reveal over the Roxy—but Clay is still navigating a terrifyingly soulless landscape of doctored flesh and leveraged couplings. If anything, his grown-up afflictions have turned darker, less detached. Clay has appetites now, a sense of entitlement, the clout to ruin, if not quite the explicit blood lust of Bret's most infamous creation, Patrick Bateman of *American Psycho*. At a slim 192 pages, *Imperial Bedrooms* even comes with a plot, a pulpy Chandleresque mystery to unravel that seems ready-made for adaptation. "Narrated by a screenwriter," Bret says. "Written by a failed novelist."

Our server returns, eager to get an order in to the kitchen.

"What do I want to have?" Bret asks.

"I don't know," she says. "We can create whatever you like."

"Really? Anything? Can you bring me a fountain of caviar?" Bret asks.

"A fountain?" she asks.

"And have two people, like, pouring it all over me while I'm just, you know, writhing in the booth," Bret says. "That's what I really want."

The Polo Lounge makes its appearance on page 20 of *Imperial Bedrooms*, the setting for an awkward reunion between Clay and his troubled childhood friend Julian. Their conversation is cryptic, distracted, Clay already anesthetized from an evening of holiday parties. *It's that time of night when I've entered the dead zone and I'm not coming out.*

"What's the 'dead zone'?" I ask Bret.

"It's that part of the night…I guess…I don't know…" he says.

"We're not in the dead zone yet, are we?" I ask, and here it seems only fair to say that I have been matching Bret's tequilas with gin.

He swirls his fourth Don Julio. "Getting there," he says, and then, catching himself, "Oh, you're going to end the piece on that, aren't you? I know it. I should never have said that."

"No," I say, making an instant calculation. "I'm going to end the piece with you saying, 'Oh, you're going to end the piece on that, I should never have said it.'"

"Right, *that's* the way you end it," Bret says. "That's the cooler way." ■

Jesse Katz is a contributing writer for Los Angeles *magazine and author of the memoir* The Opposite Field. *His profile of actor Bryan Cranston appeared in the May issue.*

Los Angeles

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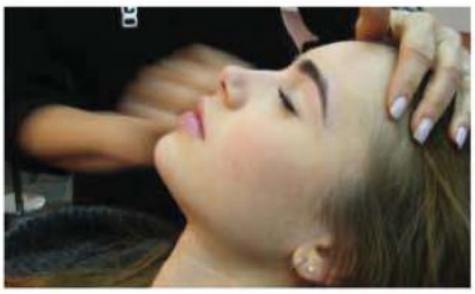
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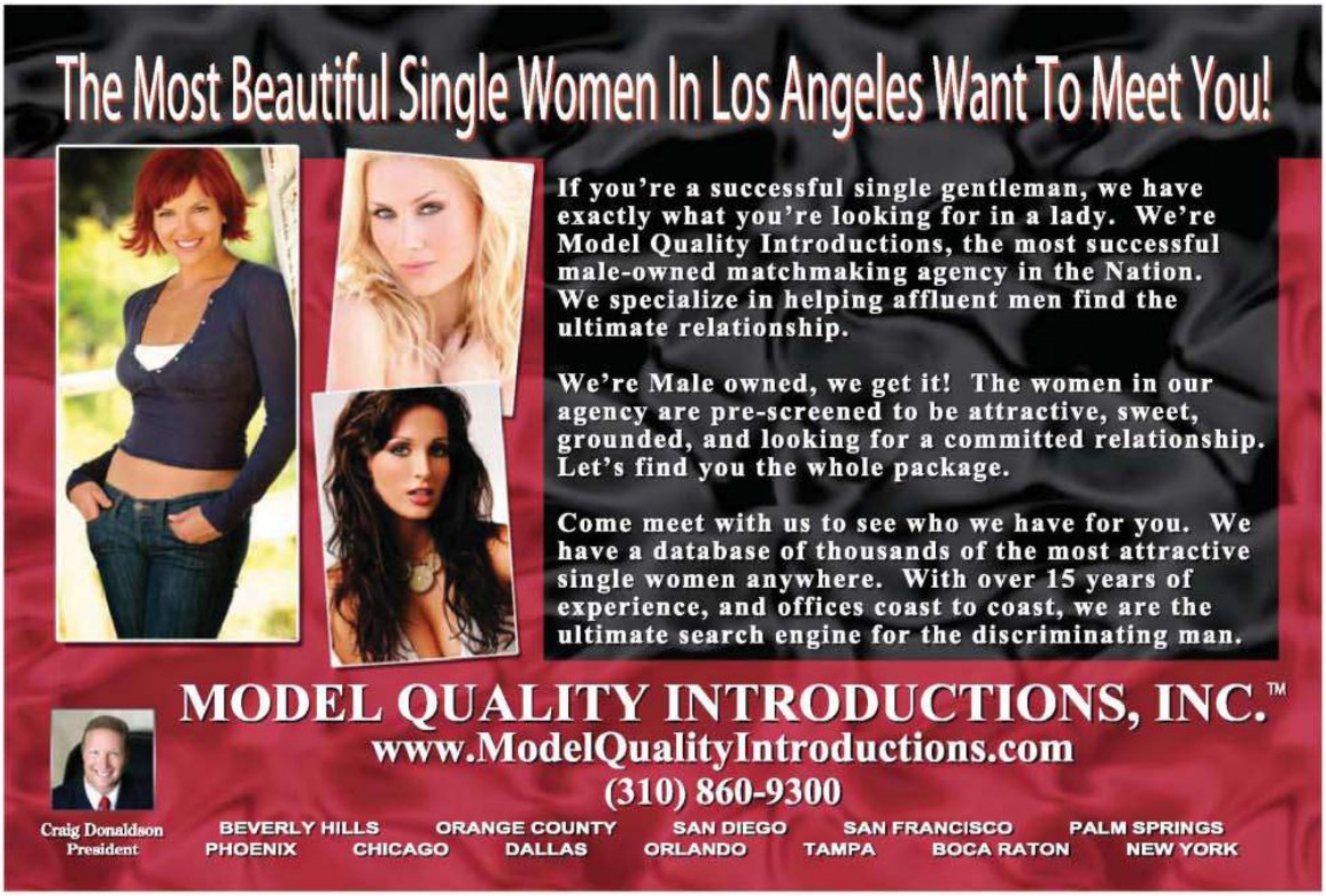
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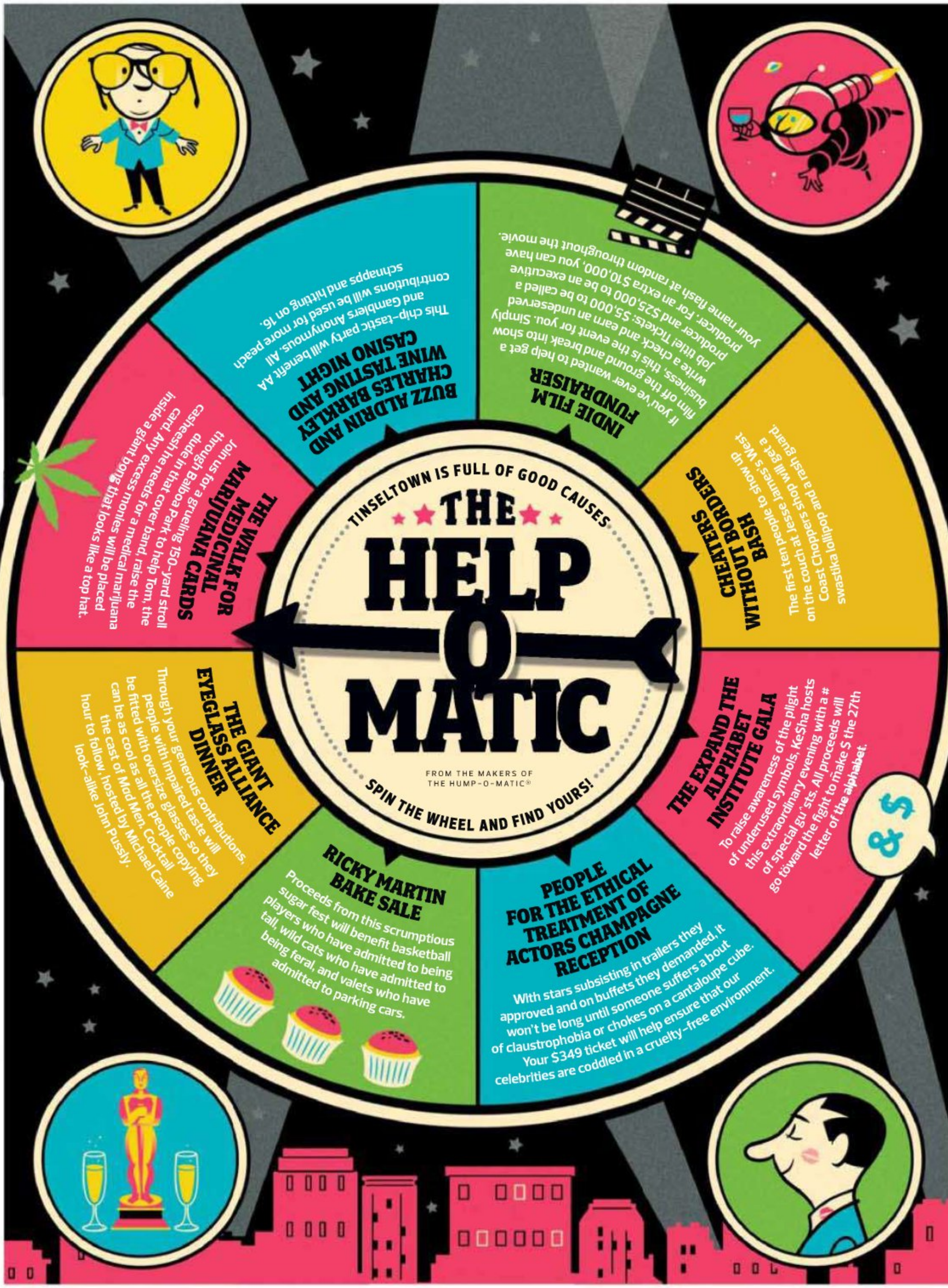


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